

P.V. NARASIMHA RAO

SELECTED SPEECHES

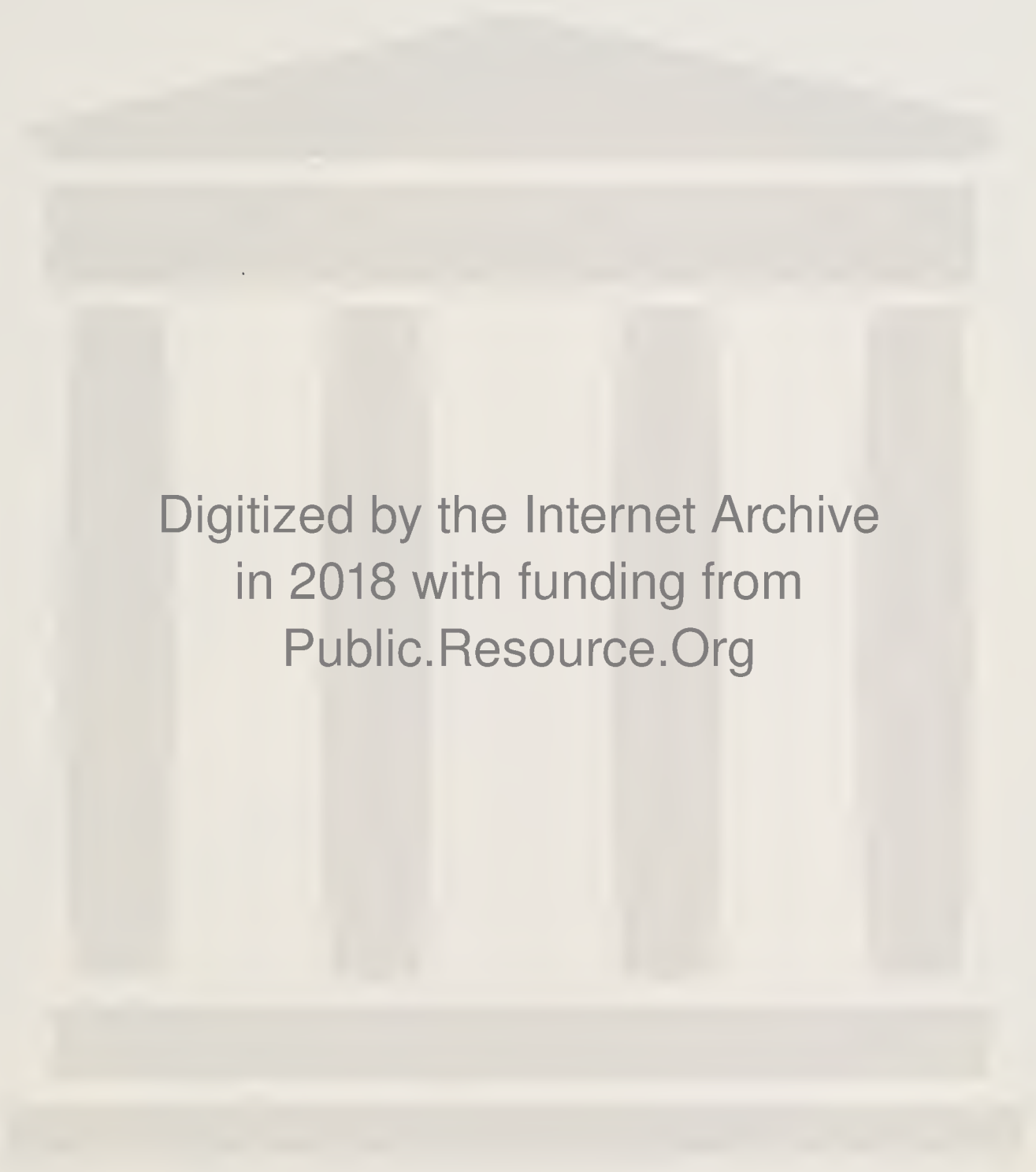
1994-95



The volume presents a selection of speeches of Prime Minister, Shri P. V. Narasimha Rao from July 1994 to June 1995. This period covers his fourth year in the office of the Prime Minister of India.

Shri Rao's commitment to democracy, human rights, global peace, secularism, uplift of the poor, ensuring better productivity and providing opportunities to the underprivileged, unemployed youth and women is the mainstay of these speeches.

His determination and fortitude in steering the country into a new era of economic liberalisation and all-round development, his articulation in pursuing India's time-tested foreign policy and fostering friendly relations with neighbouring countries are also reflected in his statements at home and abroad.



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P.V. NARASIMHA RAO
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VOLUME IV
July 1994 - June 1995

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Preface

This is the fourth volume of the selected speeches of Prime Minister, Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao. It covers the period from July 1994 to June 1995. It also includes texts of broadcasts and interviews.

The speeches which were originally in Hindi and Telugu appear here in translation.

As in the earlier volume, this volume too comprises seven sections: National Affairs, Economic Scene, Science and Technology, Education, Culture and Sports, Health and Social Welfare, International Affairs and Interviews. The speeches within each section are arranged in chronological order.

The volume does not profess to be the complete and comprehensive record of the Prime Minister's speeches though an attempt has been made to include all his major public utterances, his thoughts and comments on the national and international issues.

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I

National Affairs

Redefining the Good Society

LAST YEAR I had the privilege of inaugurating the Indira Gandhi Conference. That Conference gave an opportunity to academics and intellectuals from all over the world to exchange views on the kind of society and social values they would like to see promoted in the world. I am happy that thinkers, now from our own region, will this time narrow their focus on, our own country and the neighbourhood. I regret my inability to be present in this Conference personally due to pressing engagements in New Delhi.

These exercises of seeking a better understanding of our society and newer insights into what constitutes good society are essential to ensure that social development does not lag behind the progress of science and technology in the world and the political changes taking place around us. The quality of human life depends on all these factors and if one does not keep pace with the other, a serious dysfunctioning is created. The end of the cold war, the rise in ethnic conflicts, the spurt in religious fundamentalism, the rapid globalisation of world, particularly in information technology, the new GATT Agreement are all developments that have a major bearing on how we live. Society has to keep pace with them and maintain a two-way flow of influence to ensure that when tomorrow comes, it is an improvement upon today.

In 1947 when Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru spoke at the Asian Relations Conference, he spoke of the new emerging Asia. This Asia, he said would not only revive the intensive interaction that took place in the past among the countries of the continent, but also give the world values that were essentially Asian in character. Asian values such as strong family ties, respect for elders, religious

tolerance and living in harmony with nature have acquired a new meaning in today's world. I am happy that this Conference will deliberate on these issues.

Modern technology is shaping and changing the manner in which we live, unrecognisably. Migrations have taken place all through history. People have moved across continents in search of better living conditions. Some movement of this kind is still taking place but the scale is very limited. The migration of our century is the one taking place from rural to urban areas, particularly in developing countries. Cities overflowing with people, are growing into urban conglomerations which have to attend to civic amenities and professional and social needs of their burgeoning populace.

There is a strong trend in the modern world towards regional cooperation. Countries are joining hands with their neighbours to form economic and political unions. The economies of scale and pooling of resources greatly enhance the benefits to all parties. The heavy investments required in research and development, the setting up of infrastructural facilities, the need to expand markets and the compulsion to cooperate with neighbours to preserve the ecological balance of the region are all factors that make regional cooperation an all round necessity.

This Conference seeks to delve into the redefinition of the good society in the regional context. In an age in which other regions have made fruitful progress in regional cooperation the opportunities lost by us in not being able to go beyond the preliminaries of cooperation in our neighbourhood stands in striking contrast. The effect of this lapse is visible all round.

The human urge for excellence is manifested in the constant endeavour to change and improve upon the present. Not all change can be considered progress but a judgement on any change is best left to history. The judgement itself evolves with time. The present

bears heavily on a verdict on the past and the closer it is to it, the deeper is the impact. The fear of a change for the worse has often inhibited people from seeking change. Prosperity, which itself comes to a society when it is willing to change, frequently becomes the strongest argument for maintaining the status quo. Decay is ironically enough an inevitable process of the cycle of change and prosperity. It impairs the vitality of the society, makes it inward looking and, above all, makes it apprehensive of any attempt to seek to alter or modify what it considers its magic formula for its existing success.

This human predilection has been recognised by revolutionaries and reformers all over the world. They have realised that human society is a living organism and like all other living organisms must constantly revitalise and rejuvenate itself. The process of building new cells in this organism must never stop. If it does, the body starts dying and history is merciless in its treatment of societies that allow decay to set in. The human endeavour for excellence cannot be allowed to flag. Societies must encourage human ingenuity to strive for a better life and higher intellectual goals. This is not just a prescription for progress. It is a compulsion for survival.

What is it that gives a society, the capability and motivation to constantly rejuvenate and revitalise itself? What makes a society vibrant, innovative and creative? How does a society draw the line that separates change from chaos?

These are not easy questions to answer. Our experience and collective wisdom gives us some indication of the elements that help a society to acquire such a capability. We do not have to look very far into history or delve deep into philosophy to find these answers. Our own freedom movement, which was the largest non-violent movement in the history of humankind, incorporated goals and dreams which were finally given shape in independent India.

Societies such as ours which were subject to long periods of foreign rule had begun to lose their inner vitality and desire for change. Traditions had begun to freeze into rituals and creativity was repressed. Exploitation had sapped the resources of the country and social institutions had shrivelled defensively in self-protection.

It was the freedom movement that started changing all this. Leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Lala Lajpat Rai, Gopalkrishna Gokhale, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal and a host of others all over the country realised the need for combining social reform with the political movement for independence. The shell into which our society had withdrawn itself had to be broken. Men and women who for generations had lived in a state of deprivation and restraint had to be drawn out. Freedom from foreign rule would have little meaning if it did not accompany freedom from internal social exploitation and from the endemic cycle of poverty.

Human equality is perhaps the most significant principle that must be at the foundation of any concept of the good society. The concept in its philosophical sense has been expounded in history in different societies at different times. The philosophers of ancient and medieval India emphatically asserted the idea of equality in the divine process of creation. Their *shlokas*, songs and *bhajans* laid great emphasis on this. However, as a social reality, the idea of equality was realised in the world only in small communities and the nomadic people. All kingdoms and empires in the past were built on an assertion of the superiority of a community or race. Their foundations were laid on inequality.

Equality is now accepted as an essential attribute of a civilised society. Equality fosters mobility in society. It enables people of all classes to compete equally. Societies based on inequality have low rates of upward and downward mobility. The privileged and the poor are frozen in their class positions throughout their

lives with little hope and no opportunity for change. Children grow up to inherit the privileges or the poverty of their parents.

The concept of equality subsumes several other values that we consider essential attributes of the good society. In its political sense, the idea of democracy itself flows from the belief in equality. Any other form of government can only be based on an abhorrent violation of this principle. The one-person-one-vote principle is the reaffirmation of the concept of equality in the political arena. We must now seek to go beyond the system of indirect or passive democracy in which an undefined categorisation takes place between the rulers and the ruled. The people participate in the process of government formation only at the time of general or local elections. During the long interregnums between elections, the people's role in government is largely that of a spectator, interrupted on the odd occasion by agitations, when they seek to force the government directly to address their grievances.

The revival of Panchayati Raj institutions in India seeks to make democracy a participative process in which the people themselves deal with their problems and needs. This is necessary in order to recognise that no institution understands the problems of the people better than the people themselves. It is also important for the real success of our development programmes. From their conception to execution, and later their evaluation, the effectiveness of these development programmes is critically dependent on the involvement and support of the people. It has become a cliché to say that self-government is better than good government. In fact, self-government is the only form of good government.

In the past, Panchayats gave Indian villages self-government and autonomy. They fostered a spirit of democracy that enabled the system of parliamentary democracy brought from a country thousands of miles away to strike deep roots immediately in our country. The revival of Panchayats in the villages now will complete

the chain of democratic institutions in our country. They will now be the fountain-head of the process of social reconstruction and nation rebuilding.

Decentralisation by itself does not lead to good governance, for it is not a question of the exchange of national level neglect for the tyranny of the local landlords or the local musclemen. In a number of respects even the democratic form of government is flawed. For democracy to be genuine and the society to be governed genuinely, reflecting the will of the people, government must be truly representative. The Indian Constitution provides for positive discrimination in favour of sections of society that are otherwise unlikely to be politically supported by the rest. But we have to go deeper than this. It is not enough if decisions in a decentralised situation are taken just by the majority of votes in a meeting of the Panchayat. Decisions at the village level must be taken by the general body of the people. This is the reason why in our Panchayat system we have given the pride of place to the Gaon Sabha.

In our search for development we have to keep in mind the value of reviving human beings as the centre of the effort. The individual development of the human being is as significant as that of the social and physical environment around him. Development in this sense cannot be an external or an imposed process. It has to be self-evolved and participative. Progress cannot be a package conceived in a remote capital and brought and delivered as a gift. Experience has shown that such impositions like transplanting a fully grown tree, do not succeed. Only a seed or a sapling can be transplanted. Thereafter, the local people have to be taught and given the wherewithal to nurture it into a tree. The strength of our villages in surviving the frequent spells of political uncertainty and chaos at the national level came from their ability to run their internal affairs successfully through Panchayats.

A good society should offer security to the most vulnerable and the weakest of its constituents. In other words, the principle of the rule of law should have precedence at all times. This security takes many forms and has many dimensions such as security of the individual in the physical sense of the term, food security, the rights of women, the rights of children to mention a few. This is why a good society should ensure for all its people certain social rights such as the right to work, the right to food, the right to education, the right to health, the right to shelter and the right to information. A society which combines these rights with physical security of the individual is a good society. It is important for us to remember that the philosophical concept of a good society should be translated into tangible guarantees for the people for then only will the concept of good society have a meaning for the large majority of the people.

A great deal of the tensions in the world today arise from inequality. Whether within a country or among countries, the special privileges enjoyed by some and their persistence in preserving them have provoked resentment, opposition and often conflict. Yet no society is completely egalitarian, or without its privileged class. Governments have tried to minimise unjust inequalities by abolishing private property and instituting state control of both production and distribution. They, however, discovered that this was easier said than realised. What they got was excessive state control at the expense of liberty, great inequality and fall in production because the people gradually lost their motivation to work hard.

The market system, on the other hand, if allowed to run without any fetters, leads to grave economic inequalities, which gradually get transformed into political inequalities. Both these systems are grossly unjust. Competition and individual self-interest encourage exploitation and discourage the social aspect of human nature, altruism and fellow feeling. Such a state can neither be stable

nor peaceful. The underlying violence of the system is bound to manifest itself in some form or the other.

The market system has to be so modified and regulated as to avoid these negative fall-outs. The 'Middle Path' of the 'Mixed Economy' offers a way out of this dilemma. But the mix of the 'Mixed Economy' is variable and has to be constantly adjusted, to be maintained at the right level. Equality in a society should mean equality of access to what the society offers or what the government or the market offers. There cannot be equality in a society where waves of extreme poverty buffet islands of prosperity. What, however, complicates life in a society of this kind are social distortions like corruption and discrimination based on religion, caste and even sex. Corruption is anti-thetical to good society. Corruption is the worst form of discrimination; it means denial of access to those who cannot afford or to those who are meritorious and leads to injustice. A good society must at all times be a just society. If people on the whole come to feel that there is no justice in the society they live in, then they feel alienated and alienation weakens a society. Therefore, one of the essential pillars of a good society is relative equality and a will to fight social distortions like corruption.

Development is a function of technology. The steady research and development in technology has transformed society over the years from nomadic, to agricultural, to industrial, and now, to what is called the electronic or space age. The advancement of technology is an irrepressible process that emanates from the urge inherent in all human beings to improve their living conditions. The rapidity of change in recent times has accelerated to such a pace that the acquisition of new and advanced technologies has become an objective in itself. Modernisation has become the catchword and change is pursued for its own sake.

When dealing with technology, we, as Gandhiji said, must stress on its appropriateness—never on acquiring it for its own

sake. Technology should not create a want. It should come as a solution to it. This is why Gandhiji expressed appreciation, for example, of the sewing machine. It reduced the drudgery of stitching. His reservations on machines stemmed from his understanding of the fact that many machines reduce human beings to robots repeating their work mechanically. The advent of computers and robots have fortunately now opened the possibility of eliminating such drudgery, creating smaller work-places for people with more flexible working hours and greater scope for being creative.

Gandhiji believed in simplicity, not in poverty. A person once asked him whether the multiplication of wants was a sign of progress. Gandhiji replied, "If by advance you mean everyone having plenty to eat and drink and to clothe himself with, enough to keep his mind trained and educated I should be satisfied. But I would not like to pack more stuff into my belly than I can digest and more things than I can usefully use." Today when our planet is suffering from over-exploitation of its resources, this is a golden rule to follow for sustainable development.

India has always been a cauldron where political thought, philosophies and religious ideas have been churned out regularly. Streams of thought have flowed in from all directions and flowed out in all directions. Deeply philosophical ideas concerned with matters purely spiritual have coexisted with blatantly hedonistic thoughts. Freedom of thought, belief and faith has always been central to our culture. The richness and diversity of our philosophical thinking and religious ideas stem from this freedom. Kings never imposed their faith on the people. Many of them enjoyed learned discourses and debates on such issues. The philosopher always enjoyed a status higher than the king.

Our concept of secularism flows out of this ancient tradition. Individuals have a religion, but not the state. The state does not repress religion, nor does it impose any one religion on the people.

It respects religion, all religions. It realises that religious freedom is one of the basic freedoms of humankind, a freedom without which human beings cannot attain intellectual and spiritual self-realisation. Individuals too respect each other's religious views. After all, the right to enjoy a freedom involves a concomitant responsibility to respect the same freedom of the other.

There is a growing tendency in some societies towards religious intolerance and fundamentalism. Leaders play upon the religious sentiments of their people to maintain their hold upon them. They cloak their personal political ambitions in the garb of protecting religion. Religion is used by them as an ideology to enforce conformity. Such a selfish interpretation of religion does incalculable harm to society because it forces it into religious tyranny.

I have attempted in this brief presentation to bring before you some of the concerns of society, particularly in our part of the world. In her long public career Smt Indira Gandhi grappled with many of these and gave us solutions which only she, with her intimate and intuitive understanding of the people could. She gave us a new sense of pride in being Indians and Asians. She inspired a strong feeling of confidence. I wish you fruitful deliberations in the Conference.

Communal Harmony—India's Heritage

I AM VERY happy to be associated with this function where we are honouring some of the brave sons of the soil who risked their own lives to save innocent lives during extraordinary situations such as communal riots. This is not an ordinary achievement because normally when there is trouble, people tend to get out of it. It is only rarely that even a passerby feels like plunging into the fray, stopping such incidents and perhaps getting wounded in the process. So these friends who are here deserve not only to be congratulated and encouraged but emulated by one and all because this is where the quintessence of humanity comes up and tries its best to face evil.

Last couple of decades have witnessed the re-emergence of communalism in a virulent form in the country and we all know why this has happened. There is somehow a political input in the situation which gives a fillip to the feelings of communalism, to hate a person merely because by accident of birth he happens to be in some other religion, belongs to some other religion over which he has no control. So it is something which is illogical, totally irrational and at this rate it will never be possible to have human society living together. If it is communalism today, it can be casteism tomorrow, it can be racialism, it can be the colour of the skin and all kinds of distinctions can be thought of in order to destroy each other, in order to attack each other for something over which no one has any control. Now this is something inimical to the spirit of a secular and a pluralistic society.

The questions of pluralistic society are engaging the attention of every nation today. It is just not possible to have a uniform

society any longer. Even those societies where there was some uniformity of religion, uniformity of race, colour etc., are becoming multi-racial, are becoming pluralistic because the world has become small. There is no way we can keep these nations or any nation for that matter consisting of any one variety of people. Therefore, I have seen, I have experienced this in other countries also that the societies which are becoming increasingly mixed, increasingly pluralistic are groping for something which perhaps is available in countries like India and China. They are looking to us and it is here that India can play the role of a leader and I am not saying that we should lead or we should pose as leaders but the point is that we have some experience. Take languages for instance, we have as many as 16, 17, I think 18 languages now in the Constitution apart from so many other dialects—hundreds of them. And still there is no antagonism between language and language. Of course, we had language riots also in this country, agitations in other countries, even two languages, three languages are not able to live together because one language group had always been there as dominant and today intolerance in regard to another language group which may come from a neighbouring country, from a neighbouring continent in some cases is seen as something like an outcaste. This is happening on the language front. Now they are looking to us, they marvel at the achievement of this country. Where sixteen languages or eighteen languages are enumerated in the Constitution, each language is becoming the official language of the State, one language becomes the link language in addition to English which is available everywhere, used everywhere. Now this kind of thing just cannot be comprehended by them that it is possible in a country.

So in many ways, we are leading the way, in many ways, we are showing the model of a pluralistic society. But of course in a pluralistic society, by the very definition, we have to get over certain tendencies which go against the name of a pluralistic society. And it is here that communalism has to be tackled first because

we are secular, because we are pluralistic, because historically there is really no need, no reason at all for any communal feeling in this country. This country has welcomed everyone, this country has absorbed everyone who came from outside, people who came as victors, people who came as invaders became permanently part of this country. So this is the kind of attraction which India has held for centuries together and there is no reason why it should not be so hereafter.

We have to be careful about those who inject politics into religion and that is why the struggle for the last few years in this country has been to separate the two. This country can never go against religion. This country can never become irreligious. It is just not possible. Look at every temple in the country, the incomes are going sky high. If only my income as Government of India had gone up as the income of say Tirupati, I would be very happy. But it is not so. People are becoming more and more devoted. There are certain reasons why this devotion is increasing or at the same time the antagonism between religion and religion also is increasing because the political input has come into it, the political element has come into it, in order to exploit this. That is where our main difficulty today is and this has to be sorted out by law, by example, by exhortation, by practice and by inculcating these values, our old values once again in the younger generation.

So these are our tasks which we have been trying to address and I congratulate the winners of these awards. These are only a token. But at the same time these should be publicised very widely so that other people and particularly younger generation could take a leaf out of these great deeds which these friends have performed in order to save other innocent lives in a situation where their own lives would have been in danger. I once again congratulate them and thank the organisers by giving me this opportunity to join it.

The Vigilant Defenders of Freedom

BRAVE OFFICERS AND jawans of the armed forces, I extend to all of you my hearty good wishes and congratulate you on the eve of the fortyeighth Independence Day.

It is my indelible belief that you are fully capable of defending the frontiers of our country. It is also my firm conviction that if and when we face any grave crisis you will be ready to extend your assistance to us. Earlier also, on several occasions, you demonstrated your devotion to duty. You served the people with full commitment and devotion and as a consequence you earned the confidence and respect of the entire nation.

From the earliest times it has been our policy that India should have peaceful and friendly relations with all countries, especially our neighbours. We have always tried to remove mutual differences through discussion. We want that our talks with Pakistan under the Simla Agreement should be meaningful and purposeful. Unfortunately, Pakistan is not acting according to it and is assisting the growth of extremism. I am grateful to the people of Jammu and Kashmir and to you that you have given a stunning blow to the efforts of extremism. The situation has improved but not to the extent it should have been. Normalcy has not yet been restored. Pakistan thinks that it will be able to weaken our country by encouraging extremism and divert us from the path of improving the life of the people that we have chosen. We will, however, not allow this to happen.

We have to resist resolutely these unholy intentions so that we can give concrete shape to our dreams for social justice and economic development. You have to be vigilant about these forces.

You have always defeated the attempts made from across the border to harm us. You have always given proof of your patriotism and devotion to duty even in the midst of difficulties. Your ability has been demonstrated in the Siachen glacier as well as in the thick jungles of the North-East.

What is even more heartening is that you have given India a high place of honour by your excellent work in foreign lands. You have won the hearts of the people there. Last year, contingents of our armed forces were included in the United Nations Peace Mission in Somalia. You earned there praise and good wishes by discharge of duty and courage. You were commended throughout the world.

Although your main responsibility lies in the defence of the frontiers of the country, you never lagged behind whenever you were called upon to render assistance to the civil administration. Whether it was the destructive earthquake in Maharashtra or the bomb blasts in Bombay, you always participated in the work with great fervour in sharing the woes of the people.

Recently, you helped in providing relief to the flood affected people in Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and other parts of the country. This important contribution of the soldiers is proof of the fact that in helping the people facing difficulties you did not hesitate to place yourself in danger. Truly, you are our defenders.

The Government understands very well your grave responsibility. For that reason, constant efforts are being made to improve the supply of the required weapons and other equipment. Because your service situations are difficult, the government is conscious of the need for improvement in your service conditions and is making efforts in that direction.

We are making all possible efforts to modernise your arms and equipment so that you can scale the heights of success. The Army

is being equipped with good rifles. Tanks and aircraft are being improved. Many electronic instruments and other things are being incorporated into the Army. These programmes are being continuously operated. The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), the weapon factories and the public sector units in the sphere of defence are altogether making important contribution. It is a matter of great pride for the nation that the DRDO scientists have developed the Arjun tank which has very good capability.

In the recent past, we have increased the benefits given to the soldiers who are working in the field. In view of the difficult conditions of work for the soldiers on duty in remote and difficult areas we are giving greater monetary benefits to them. Some categories of ex-soldiers have been given a one-time raise in the pension. Also, the new Pay Commission will consider these different aspects.

There is no doubt that your services are invaluable and they cannot be measured in terms of money. The jawans are carrying the burden of the defence of the country on their broad shoulders, not as a matter of occupation but as a sacred duty. Thanks to your efforts, the unity, tradition and culture of the country will be secured. You are the vigilant gaurdians of the future of the country. The people expect this from you and that is also best for the nation.

I cannot restrain myself from praising your vigilance and carefulness on this occasion. In the days to come I wish you to remain more vigilant and fully fit. Until the people who are thinking ill of us and those who are evil-minded return to the path of sanity, the country would expect you to defend its freedom constantly.

Our Commitment : Unity and Uplifting the Poor

MY GREETINGS TO you all on the auspicious occasion of the 48th Independence Day. I offer my best wishes for the betterment of our country and the world as a whole. May you all live happily and the country move ahead on the path of progress.

You are aware of the tremendous changes taking place the world over in recent years, the maps of several countries have been redrawn. Such has been the magnitude of the changes in these countries that we cannot even recognise the picture which has now emerged. We are also trying to keep pace with this changing world. At the same time we do not want and, in fact, we cannot give up our intrinsic values. As Mahatma Gandhi said, freedom does not mean mere change of masters; the essence of freedom lies in changing the lot of *Daridranarayan*—our poor brethren. I would like to assure you that we have been following and will continue to follow the same mission. This is the policy of the Government.

This Government has been in office for a little more than three years. Many things have happened during these years and I have been informing you about them from time to time. The overall picture that emerges will make it clear that during these three years considerable progress has been made. On the whole, peace and harmony prevails in the country and people are busy in their work—in the task of development and country's progress. We have made and are making sincere efforts to solve the problems. Nor will there be any slackening of such efforts in future.

Punjab is peaceful. The State continues to hold the first position in the field of foodgrains production and in many other

fields of development. The problem of Assam has been resolved. There was some problem regarding Bodoland but that too is being tackled. Some agitations and disturbances are taking place there, but that should not cause undue worry.

In our North-Eastern States there are occasional disturbances. Sometimes our tribal brothers inhabiting that region clash with one another. But on the whole, the situation is fully under control.

Now, let me speak about Kashmir which, for some time has been a problem for us. Though there has been considerable improvement in the situation, it has not reached the level of normalcy as yet. The reason is not very far to seek. Everybody knows, how Pakistan has been actively encouraging terrorism in the State from across the border, how it has been training the terrorists on its land and giving them financial help, how it has been arming and then sending them across the border into the State. There is no doubt about this. For so many years, we have been collecting evidence of the misdeeds of Pakistan, bringing that to the notice of the countries friendly to us and telling them what Pakistan has been doing all these years. Now, after 14th August, 1994, I think no further proof is required when they have themselves openly declared that they would continue their help to the terrorists in Kashmir, give them arms and send reinforcements. They have said that this would continue for ever.

I would like to ask these friendly countries, "Respected friends, what do you say now? Till yesterday, you believed us only partially. Sometimes you would tell us that perhaps Pakistan had earlier been doing it but not now?" Only recently, I had had occasions to listen to this kind of talk in some of the countries I visited. Now I want to ask them if they still have any doubt about it. So it is very obvious that Pakistan does not want to stop these activities. Instead, it has openly announced before the world that it would continue with them. Our reply can only be that we are also not going to sit back until we have completely rooted out this blatant

interference in our internal affairs. It is our resolve and we want to make this clear to them.

Meanwhile, we have taken several steps in Kashmir to bring peace to the State and to identify the terrorists. I say 'terrorists', for no other word can befit them. They have been mercilessly killing people, especially opinion leaders of the State—lawyers, doctors and religious leaders. Recently they also killed the Assembly Speaker. Their victims include staff of media installations, like All India Radio and Doordarshan. They killed the Vice-Chancellor of a university. They have been killing government servants who are simply performing their duties and who have nothing to do with politics. And there is no count of innocent civilians being killed by them. How would you describe these heinous acts? What else is it, if not terrorism? I have no other word to describe this. But you can rest assured that we will completely wipe out terrorism.

Recently, we have taken several initiatives in J & K for accelerating the pace of development and boosting the morale of the civil administration terrorised by guns. I may tell you that we are going to take up the revision of electoral rolls shortly. We are also engaged in delimiting the constituencies for conducting elections. This clearly shows the direction in which we are moving. We are moving towards holding elections in the State. I don't want to give you any specific date because that might unduly provoke the terrorists to indulge in more violence. But there is no doubt about the direction in which we are moving. Now when we have been doing all this, we would expect the international community to take note of it and to see who is the one actually trampling the human rights. They will have an opportunity to judge this.

It is very unfortunate that not only something bad is done but it is openly declared that what they are doing is good and that they will continue to do the same in future also. This type of language does not behove friends. I want to appeal to Pakistan, please accept

the hand of friendship we have extended. There can be several meeting grounds between us. Sometimes differences may crop up, but they can be resolved. I would however, like to make it clear to Pakistan, you may or may not cooperate with us, but, 'with you, without you, in spite of you' Kashmir will remain with us. It is an integral part of India. This will not change, never, not in the least. They say they are a nation of twelve crores. If they talk of crores, you can understand what my answer would be. However, it is not a question of crores; it is a question of justice, it is a question of law and the Constitution. You cannot negate all this and reverse the course of history. The sooner we all realise this, the better it is for us. This is what I want to convey.

Let us now look at our economic scenario. I have been telling you from time to time about the progress we have made during the three years. Today the situation in our country is not as it was in 1991. It has improved a lot. We have foreign exchange reserves worth Rs. 51,000 crore. Just imagine, in 1991, we had foreign exchange worth only Rs. 3,000 crore. It is no mean achievement. You can imagine to what extent the creditworthiness of our country has gone up. Not only this, we have even repaid the IMF loan well in advance, so that we may be spared of interest liabilities to that extent. We told our creditors that we have the money now and we want to repay, which you should accept. We would borrow when we are in need. Has it ever happened before? This has happened in a very few countries. In India also, when Indiraji was the Prime Minister, it happened once and after that this has happened a second time, that is this year.

I want to tell you that this is ample proof of our creditworthiness, our solvency. As a result of the confidence that world has come to have in India, investments are flowing into our country from abroad. Large industries are being set up. Only a few days back, we have cleared a foreign project for power in Maharashtra worth about Rs. 8000 crore. I would like to have another ten or twelve such projects

to come to our country so that the resources available with us are spared. If such projects had not come, and we had not got funds in the country, the Government would have been obliged to raise the money by taxing you, because we cannot do without electricity. The amount we have saved now, will be spent for the poor, for the children, for the repair of schools, for the programmes relating to education, health and other facilities. I have been emphasising this time and again. Today I am placing before you a concrete example.

A beginning has been made and more projects of similar nature are coming in because people abroad have come to have confidence in India, in its stability, in its economy, in its law and order situation, and they are convinced that there is no risk of losing their money invested here. Instead, they would earn profits. Whilst they earn profits, we are also benefited. People get jobs; our engineers, doctors and thousands of educated persons get employment. Therefore, we would like this process to continue. Ours is a big country. Just one project will not make any impact. If a project comes up in Maharashtra, people in Assam do not think much of it. So it has to come in Assam as well. It has to be in Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and other regions. In fact, when such big projects come up in all the States, then only it will have an impact and we shall realise what industrialisation means in the real sense of the term.

The investments coming from abroad are not going to deprive us of our freedom. Indian company and Indian partners are investing in such projects along with foreigners. That means our people have a share in them. About 80 per cent of the foreign investments are joint ventures. Therefore, it is entirely fallacious to say that we would be swallowed up. These projects have investments both from Indians and foreigners. Nobody will shift them anywhere else. If the projects come here they will not be compromised in any way. And we really need these projects and investments in the power sector, in oil industry, in metallurgical industry, which are most

essential. They are coming in electronics, chemicals and other areas of our priority.

Now I come to agriculture. God has been kind to us. We have had good rains and consequently good harvests for the last three-four years. Our farmers have created a miracle. No other country has, perhaps, witnessed a revolution of this kind.

But we are faced with a problem now. You may not perhaps believe it, but it is a fact that when the Kharif crop is harvested in a couple of weeks, we shall have no space to store the paddy. I had said this earlier also. Today I have got the statistics. You may not perhaps be aware that as on date we have 3.25 crore tonnes of foodgrains in our stock. We do not have enough storage facilities. So, the foodgrains from the new harvest will have to be kept in the open. It may result in some loss, but we are helpless. I would like to utilise foodgrains for our children and students who live in hostels. I have to see that at least 10 to 15 lakh tonnes are out of the godowns for use, so that we have space to store the foodgrains from the new crop. Old stocks are in quite good condition and we want to use them. As of now, there seems to be no chance for exporting them. So we would like to use them for our own people. We want to give some wheat to Modern Food Industries. They have assured us that if we give them wheat, a rupee cheaper, they will proportionately reduce the price of bread they manufacture out of it. We want to give them the surplus wheat so that the price of bread comes down.

We have our Integrated Child Development Scheme. The Anganwadi Programme for villages has not yet reached all of them. We propose to spread it throughout the length and breadth of the country in a couple of years. In order to enhance the nutritive value of the food served to these children, we would like to give some more wheat out of our stocks. We have in our country thousands of hostels in which mostly students from the poorer sections, including those belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Backward

Classes, reside. They have no means to avail of the facilities of private hostels, so they live in government hostels. Some States have large numbers of such hostels, in which thousands of students live. We would like to provide them more nutritious food and we shall do so out of the surplus stocks with us. In this way, we may be able to dispose of 10 to 15 lakh tonnes of stock which will, at the same time, benefit the students and the tiny tots covered by the Integrated Child Development Scheme.

We are chalking out this programme, the implementation of which will start in a few days. We are trying to solve our problems in this way—not by exporting our foodgrains but by providing more nutrition to our own people.

As you know, we have started the revamped Public Distribution System (PDS) in about 1800 blocks two years back. This scheme has been operating quite well. We would like to provide more foodgrains through the PDS at cheaper prices and overcome the shortcomings which has been there in this system. Towards this end we have constructed several godowns, provided a number of vehicles to the State governments to carry foodgrains to the remote areas. It is a gigantic programme. There is no time to go into details, but I may say that a programme of such dimension has not perhaps been undertaken earlier. And we propose to expand it further by covering more blocks. We would like to cover about 200 more blocks and eventually spread the programme all over the country.

You are aware of the huge amount we have provided for rural development. You must have heard many times that we have allocated Rs. 30,000 crore in this Five Year Plan and more than Rs. 7000 crore is being given in one year. People come to me from villages and tell me that they have never seen so much money coming to their villages from Delhi. Presently as much as Rs. 40 to 50 crore are at the disposal of each of the District Collectors. It is being used for public works. We feel that a revolution is under way, in fact it

is taking place there, in every village. Now Panchayats are being set up in villages under a new law and much of this money will go to them. They would take up the implementation of development works and schemes for the welfare of the people according to their priorities.

I may assure you that now paucity of funds would not be felt that much. But now the local people, local leadership of the Panchayats will have to supervise how the money is spent. Nobody from here would supervise that. At times people from here may go but that would not help. It is the local people who will have to oversee how the money is being used. Later on, nobody should complain that the money was not spent properly. Therefore, I want to warn you in advance that people in all the villages and the youth should be on their alert in this regard. This programme will run very smoothly, if Sarpanchs and other members of Panchayats discharge their responsibilities properly. We intend to provide more money for this in the next Five Year Plan.

I had announced three new schemes last year from these ramparts. As you know, we have been continuing several schemes which were started by Rajivji—Jawahar Rozgar Yojana, Nehru Rozgar Yojana, Indira Awas Yojana. Several schemes of this type started by him continue to be implemented with full vigour. Simultaneously, I had announced three new schemes last year and these schemes are also progressing very well. One of the three schemes is 'Mahila Samriddhi Yojana' which is for our sisters. You will be surprised to know that within a year, rather within 8-9 months, 13 lakh women, 13 lakh of our sisters, have opened their own accounts in post offices. You may say 13 lakh is not a big number where crores live. But you should try to appreciate the significance of 13 lakh women going to the post offices on their own and opening their accounts within 8 months in their own name. It means that they have liked this scheme a lot and they are very enthusiastic about it. I may add here that out of these 13 lakh women,

at least 2 lakh belong to Scheduled Tribe areas which shows how far this awakening has reached and how far it is about to reach.

Some of the States have done very well in this regard, though some others have done very little work under this scheme. Rather, I should say, some have not yet started on this. I would like to appeal to the Chief Ministers of these States that we have had enough of quibbles and quarrels. This programme is above party politics where there is no room for rivalry. This is for the common good of the people, for the good of the women. I would appeal them to go ahead, and implement the scheme by asking their people, their party, their followers, their youth that when other States have been working on this, why should it not be implemented in ours.

Another programme is for rural employment. You know, people in their own villages do not have work for all the 365 days. Our programme is to provide them employment at least for 100 days in a year. It is being implemented very well. According to reports we are receiving, things have improved a lot. Wherever this programme has been launched, people have stopped migrating to the cities during the lean period because we have started many types of work—like construction of roads, small tanks, school buildings. On the one hand people and the villages are being benefited by these construction works and on the other hand a lot of employment opportunities are being generated.

The third programme is for the youth—the urban youth, who have studied only up to 8th standard, 9th standard or matric. The programme is to provide a loan of one lakh of rupees to each such young person. This amount contains a subsidy of Rs. 7,500. The youths are to be trained for running small business ventures like bicycle repair workshop, shops and the like. Last year, we set a target to give assistance to 40,000 youths. I am happy that about 32,000 or 33,000 youths have received the amount and training under the programme and are now engaged in their work.

This year we want to increase the number of beneficiaries to two lakhs. Funds have been arranged for this. Once again I would like to request the States which have not taken up the programme, to take it up and implement. I would not like to name such States in public as it is not done. The States which have taken up the programme have done very well and I congratulate them. At the same time I appeal to the Chief Ministers of the States where it has not been taken up to implement the programme. Funds are there, provision has already been made, and only attention is needed to make the programme work.

The three programmes are making good progress. We thought about some other programmes, which could be implemented by us. I feel that there are certain programmes, which can be undertaken. A programme for children could not be taken up last year. Now we want to include it. You know that there are around 20 million children in our country who should be attending schools but are not doing so. They are working in factories to increase the income of their parents. Working in the factories means end of their education and the children's development forever. It is a fact which we have to accept. This is unfortunate for our coming generations. We have, therefore, said that the young children working in occupations such as quilt making, carpet weaving, which are very hazardous, and tell adversely upon their health should be withdrawn from there and enrolled in schools. They have to be educated, they have to be trained in various crafts and such vocations which may enable them to earn their livelihood later. We are taking up this programme. There are about 20 lakh children engaged in such hazardous vocations, that tell upon their health adversely. We want to withdraw them from such industries and put in schools in the course of next four-five years.

The only way to achieve this aim is to provide the parents of such children full employment to increase their incomes because the parents are so poor that they cannot sustain themselves without

additional income earned by the children. If such parents are provided full employment and their income is raised, there is no reason why they should not be sending their children to school willingly. But they are helpless and we are trying to rid them of their helplessness. The new programme aims at improving the prospects of the children whose life may be ruined because of their early employment in hazardous industries. The programme announced today will be implemented shortly. All the arrangements have been made.

I want to talk about another programme. In bigger cities there are municipal corporations. They get funds and also have other sources of income. So far as villages are concerned, we have already made adequate provisions. But there are smaller towns with a population ranging from 50,000 to 150,000. They are neither cities nor villages. They are beset by the ills of both. There is no agency to look after the well-being of these towns. Since they do not have enough income to provide civic amenities, their condition is becoming worse. People migrate from villages and settle down, and slums grow leading to unhygienic conditions affecting the health of the people. We want to take up 300 such towns with a population upto one lakh and we propose to spend Rs. 800 crore for their betterment on a priority basis in the next five years. The scheme has been drawn up and I have studied it yesterday. I found that it has been well prepared. Now we are in a position to take up its implementation.

Now I would like to take up 2-3 other important issues. We have undertaken quietly a number of programmes for minorities. These programmes have not been advertised but I would like to tell about them. The Rapid Action Force (RAF) was raised for the protection of life and property of the people. Last year I announced that five RAF battalions would be raised. But we have doubled the strength by raising 10 battalions. These have been located at places such as : Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Allahabad, Belgaum, Delhi, Aligarh, Thiruvananthapuram, Jamshedpur, Bhopal and Meerut. In

this Force, women are also included because sometimes we need their help to control the situation. God forbid, we may not need more of them because if people live in peace and harmony we do not need such forces. But still we will be on our guard and if need arises we will try to increase the number of these battalions. We will not hesitate to do so. The members of this Force are trained in a special way, a lot of thinking goes in their selection and they are always ready for every kind of duty. Whenever there is a riot or disturbance, they immediately reach the scene of occurrence and control the situation. They are specially trained for this kind of job and I feel that because of them several riots can be controlled and will be controlled before they do any serious damage. This Force will continue to do its work and its capacity can be increased in the future.

Many a time I have referred to the Minorities Commission. You know that a law has been enacted in this regard. We are fully conscious of the educational foundation in the name of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, and as you know there are several similar institutions which especially take care of the education of the minorities. I would not go into details because they have already been mentioned.

Today, I want to draw your attention to another ambitious programme. We wanted to set up a corporation which would help members of the minorities in setting up their own enterprises and in getting proper education. I had made an announcement about this last year. There were some legal hurdles and I am very glad to announce that with a lot of efforts, we have been able to remove them and now the "National Minorities Finance and Development Corporation" will come into being with an authorised capital of Rs. 500 crore. The Union Cabinet has already cleared it and this would take shape in the coming few days. When this Corporation starts working, I would like the lakhs of youth belonging to the minority communities to take full advantage of this. This was a promise made by me last year and I was a little worried about the delay in setting

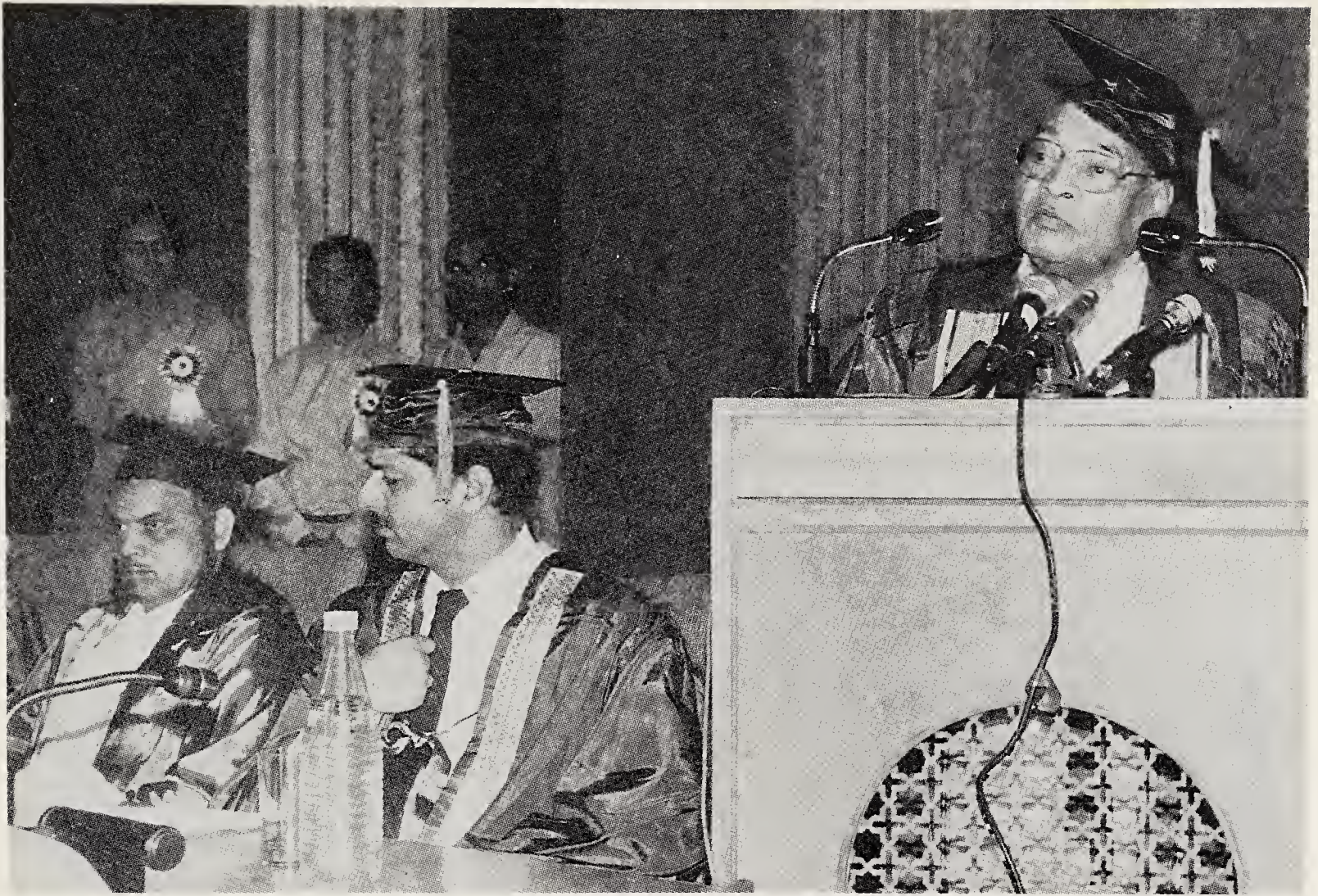
it up. I myself went into all the details and strived to remove all the hurdles. I am glad that we succeeded in our efforts.

I shall give you another very good news. From today, you can watch TV telecast in eleven languages. I recall that I had made an announcement regarding telecast in five languages last year. Today, I am announcing that programmes will be telecast in 11 languages and you need not keep eleven antennas for this facility. Now while sitting in Delhi, you can watch programmes of Calcutta, Madras, Hyderabad, Bombay etc. It is a big achievement and I presume that in the next few months we will be able to telecast the programmes in 13 languages, instead of 11 and you will be able to watch the programmes of all the languages, wherever they are being telecast, on your TV sets through a dish antenna. I am, really, very happy to announce this.

I had addressed our jawans on matters of defence and security last evening. They will get all the encouragement and support from us. We shall provide them any kind of arms they would require—most modern or otherwise. They should not have any apprehension on this. Our soldiers are doing their duty on borders and assisting the people in different parts of the country. Not only this, they are working in some foreign countries also and they have made India proud. They have made a place for themselves in the hearts of the people of Cambodia, Somalia or wherever we have sent them. I congratulate them once again and assure them that they will not find us wanting in our efforts to fulfil their requirements. A good force is always armed with the most modern weapons so that it goes to war without any apprehension and with full confidence. While congratulating our forces, I want to assure our forces that we have already tried to improve the terms and conditions of their service and hope that the new Pay Commission will go further into this matter. But I would like to add here that there is no way we can measure and fully compensate the sentinels of our freedom as their service is an act of patriotism. I would like to greet and congratulate them once again.

Now I will come to matters relating to our Foreign Policy. Today, India is maintaining friendly relations with all the countries of the world. I have undertaken visits to several countries like the USA, Russia, China, England, Germany, France, Iran, Korea, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Mauritius, Indonesia, Oman and others. They have high regards for India. Bilateral cooperation is increasing, cooperation in the economic field is increasing very rapidly. In terms of foreign investment, which is another form of such cooperation, the amounts we have received during the last three years is almost twice the investment we had got during the previous ten years. I am not saying this just for the sake of comparison but the facts speak. I am sure this is going to take place on a larger scale in future. I am going to Singapore, Vietnam and Malaysia. We have very cordial relations with all the countries. I have also told you that we have cordial relations with all our neighbours. I will once again ask our friends in Pakistan that they should accept our hand of friendship, and not spurn it. After all we have to coexist, we have to live as neighbours. We cannot move away from our neighbours. Pakistan will remain where it is, and we will remain here where we are.

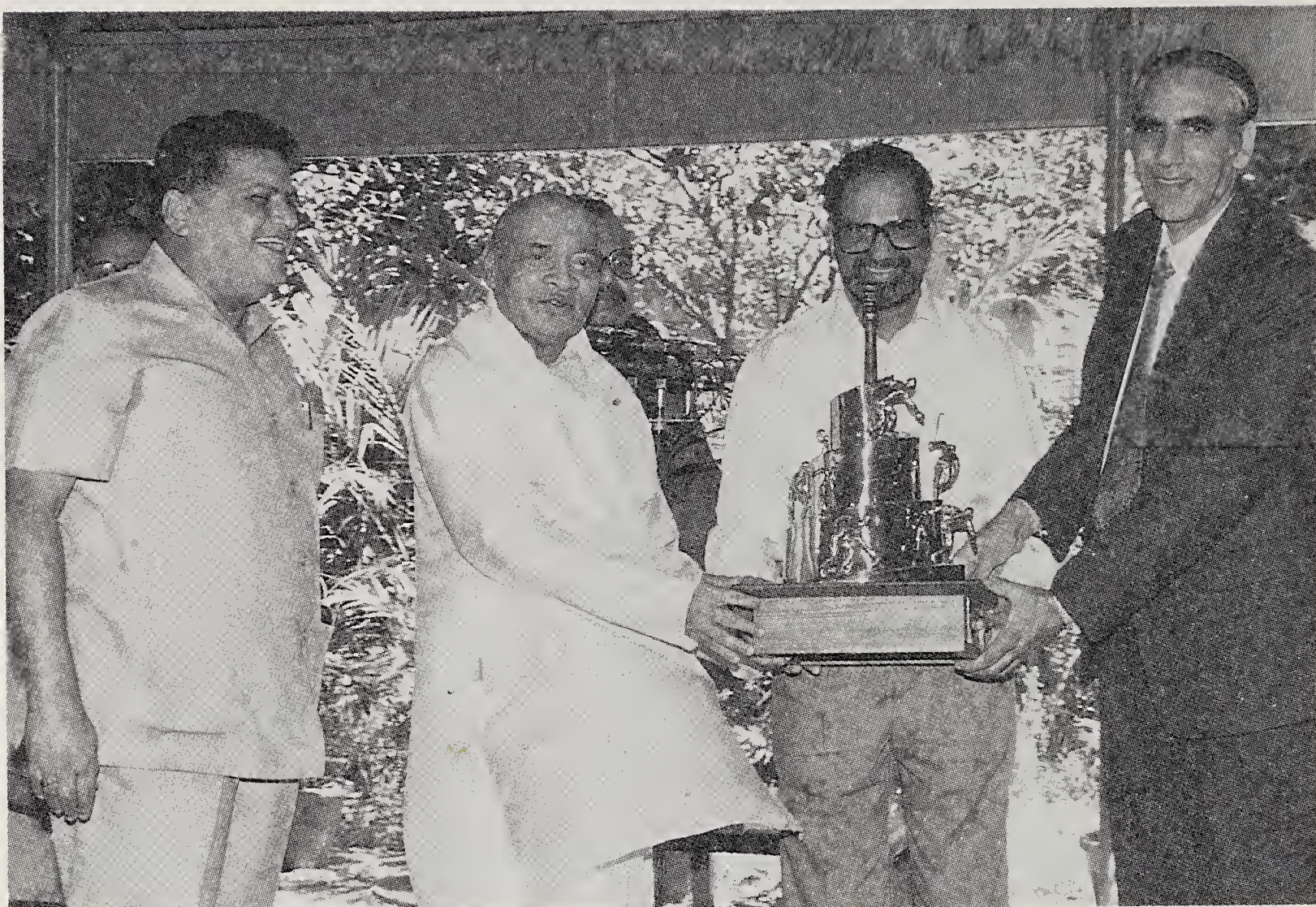
There is a big hue and cry about our missiles and missile programme and a lot of propaganda is going on. It is very strange that though Pakistan has with it readymade bought off the shelf missiles, nobody talks about them. We only want to experiment in our laboratories, and conduct some tests and that causes a lot of hue and cry. What kind of justice is this, we fail to understand. We have not increased our expenditure on defence. India is not a small country. Do I have no right, is it not my duty to mobilise resources for the defence requirements of a country so vast, with such vast borders and coastlines? Let anybody say anything, I shall mobilise the resources. Our first priority is the security of the country. There is no scope for any compromise, any reduction in it. That is why, I want to tell my friends that they should not compare India with other countries. They should see the case of India according to its



*Delivering the convocation address at Hamdard University,
New Delhi, 4 July 1994*



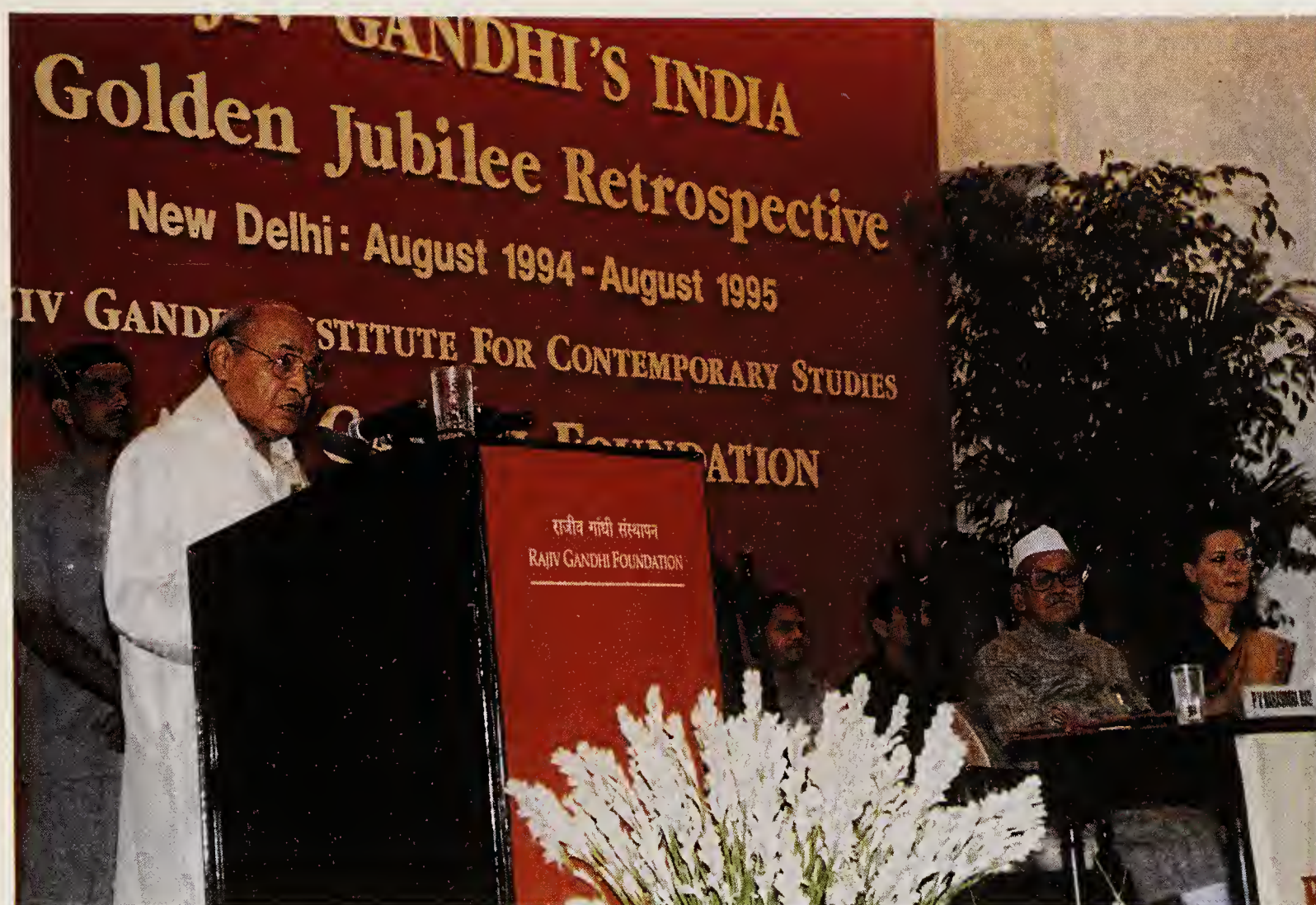
*Addressing the Chief Executives of public sector enterprises,
New Delhi, 30 July 1994*



Presenting PM's Trophy to the Bhilai Steel Plant at a function, New Delhi, 1 August 1994



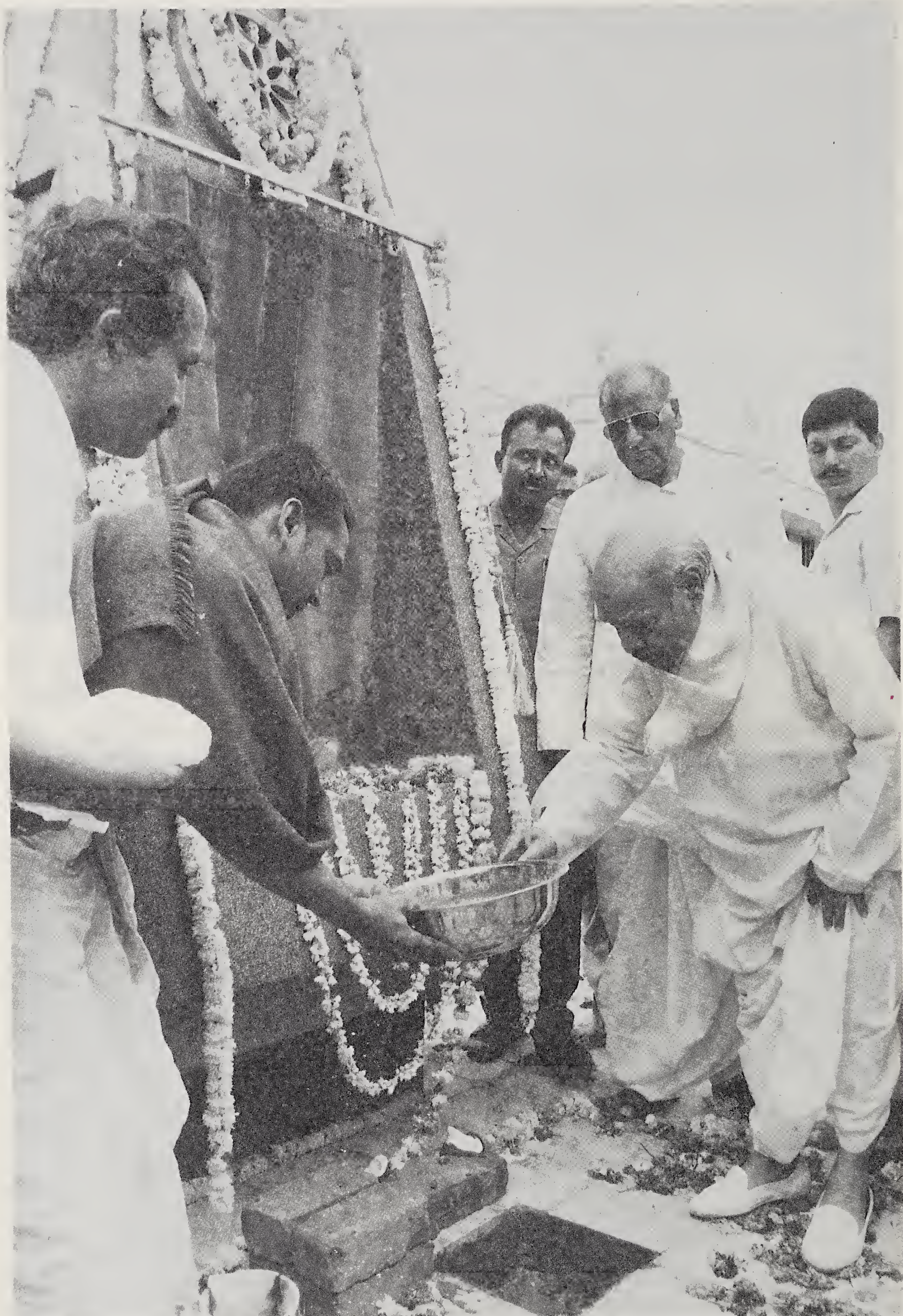
Addressing the nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort on Independence Day, Delhi, 15 August 1994



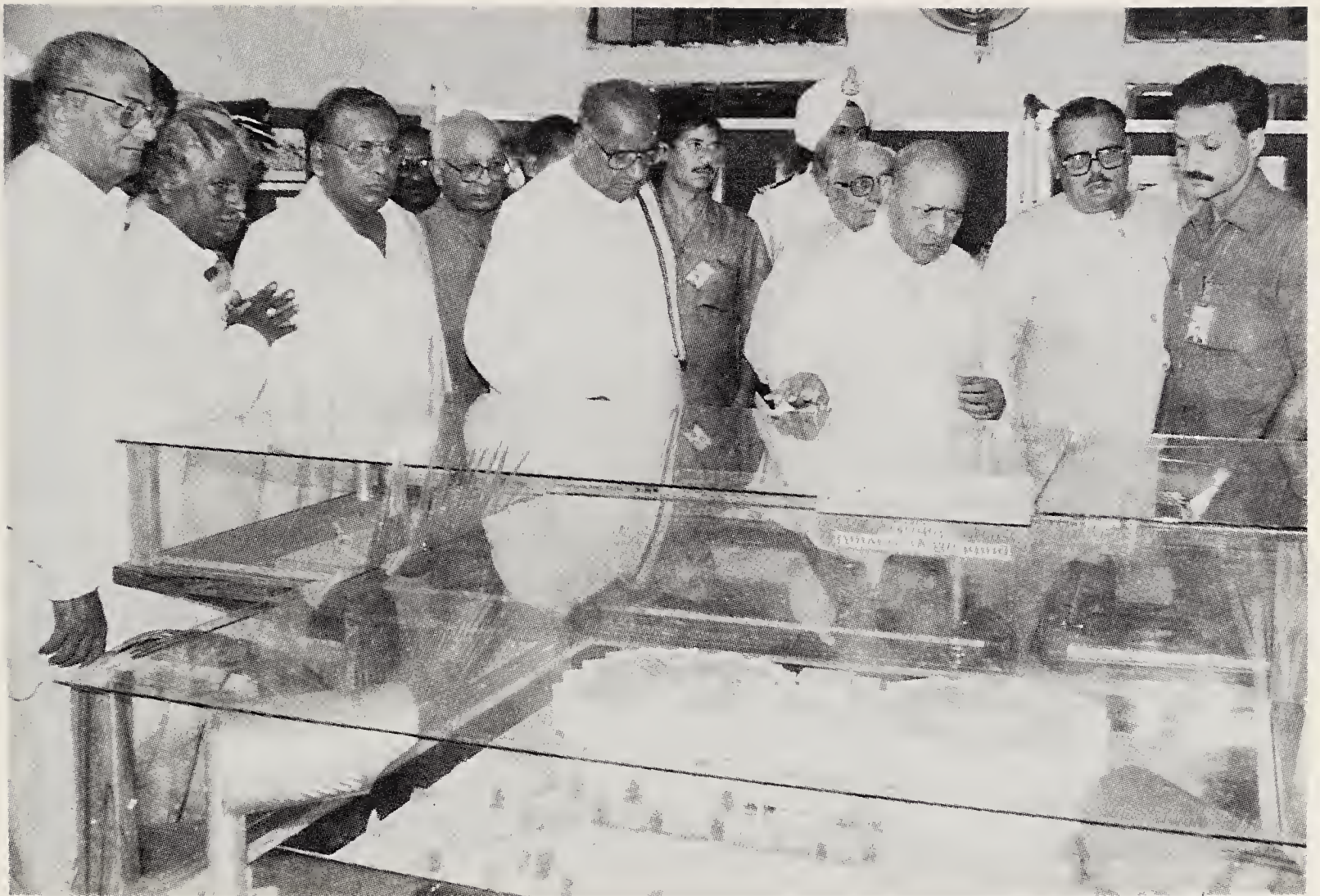
Addressing a symposium organised by Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, New Delhi, 20 August 1994



At the presentation of Rajiv Gandhi National Sadbhavana Award to Ustad Bismillah Khan, New Delhi, 20 August 1994



*Laying the foundation-stone of a water supply scheme at
Nandyal, Andhra Pradesh, 30 August 1994*



Looking at Dr B.R. Ambedkar Open University building model during the inauguration function of its new campus, Hyderabad, 31 August 1994



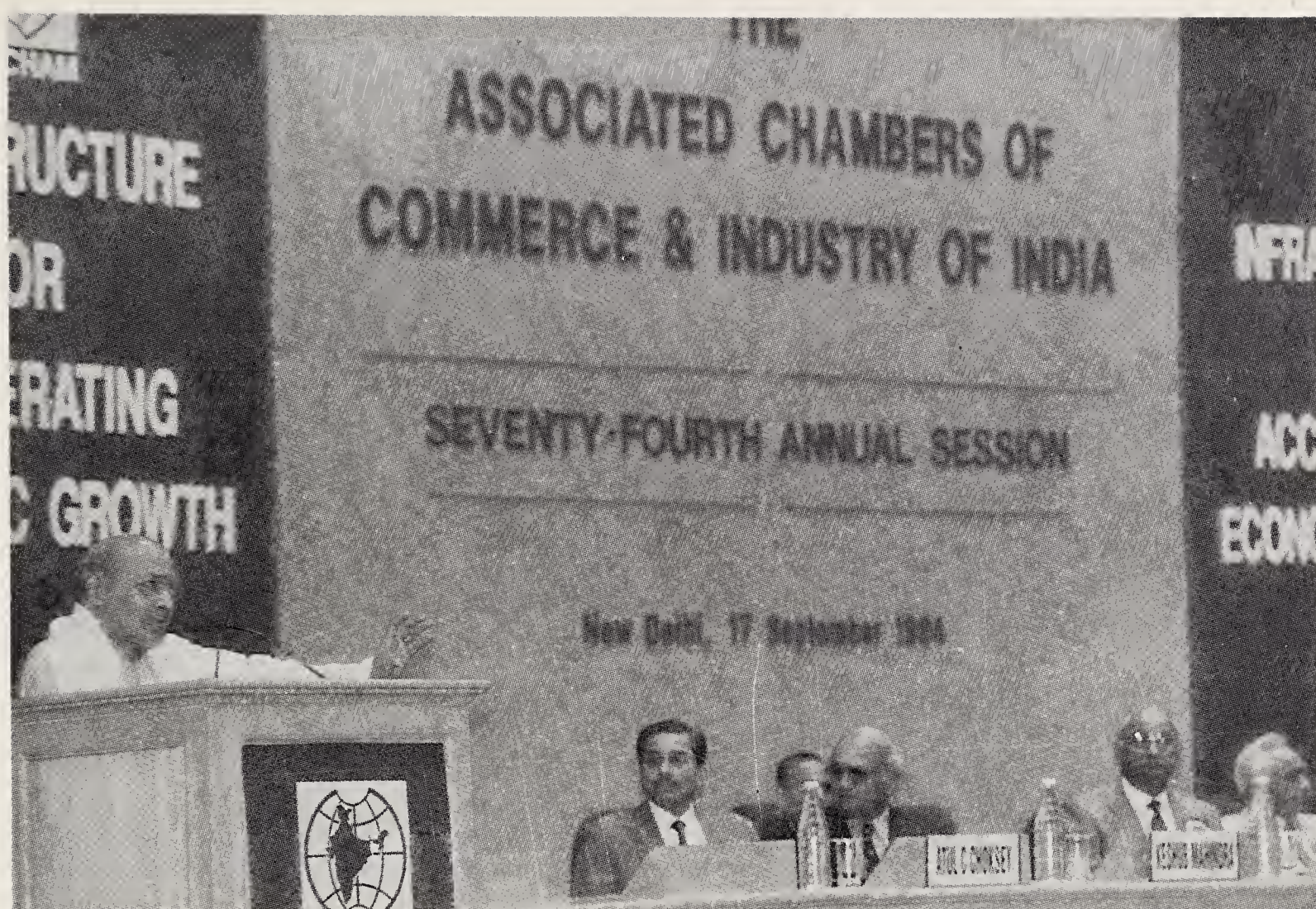
Inaugurating a broad gauge railway line between Chitradurga and Rayadurg, Chitradurga, 31 August 1994



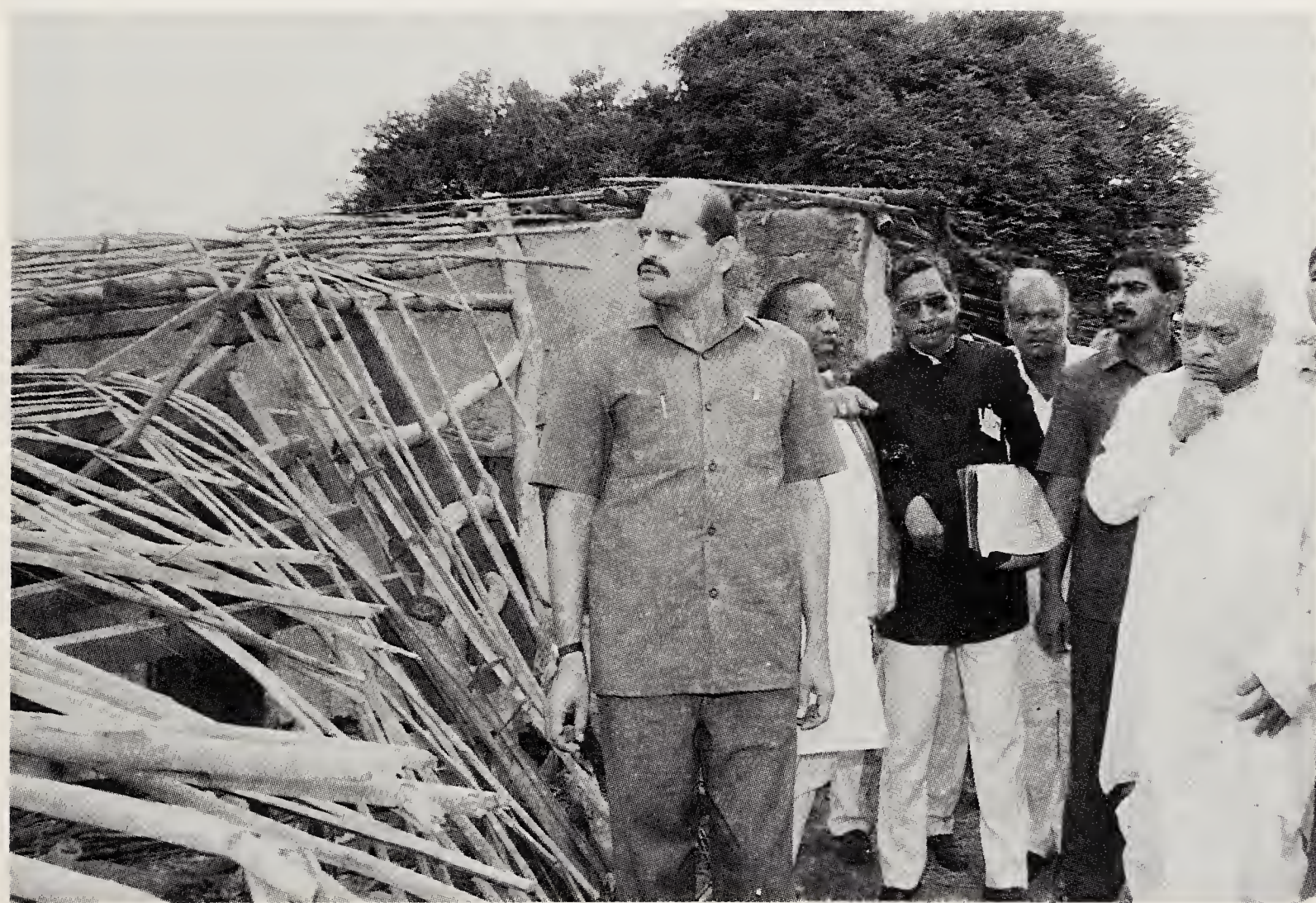
Presiding over a meeting of the Chief Ministers on Identity Card Issue, New Delhi, 12 September 1994



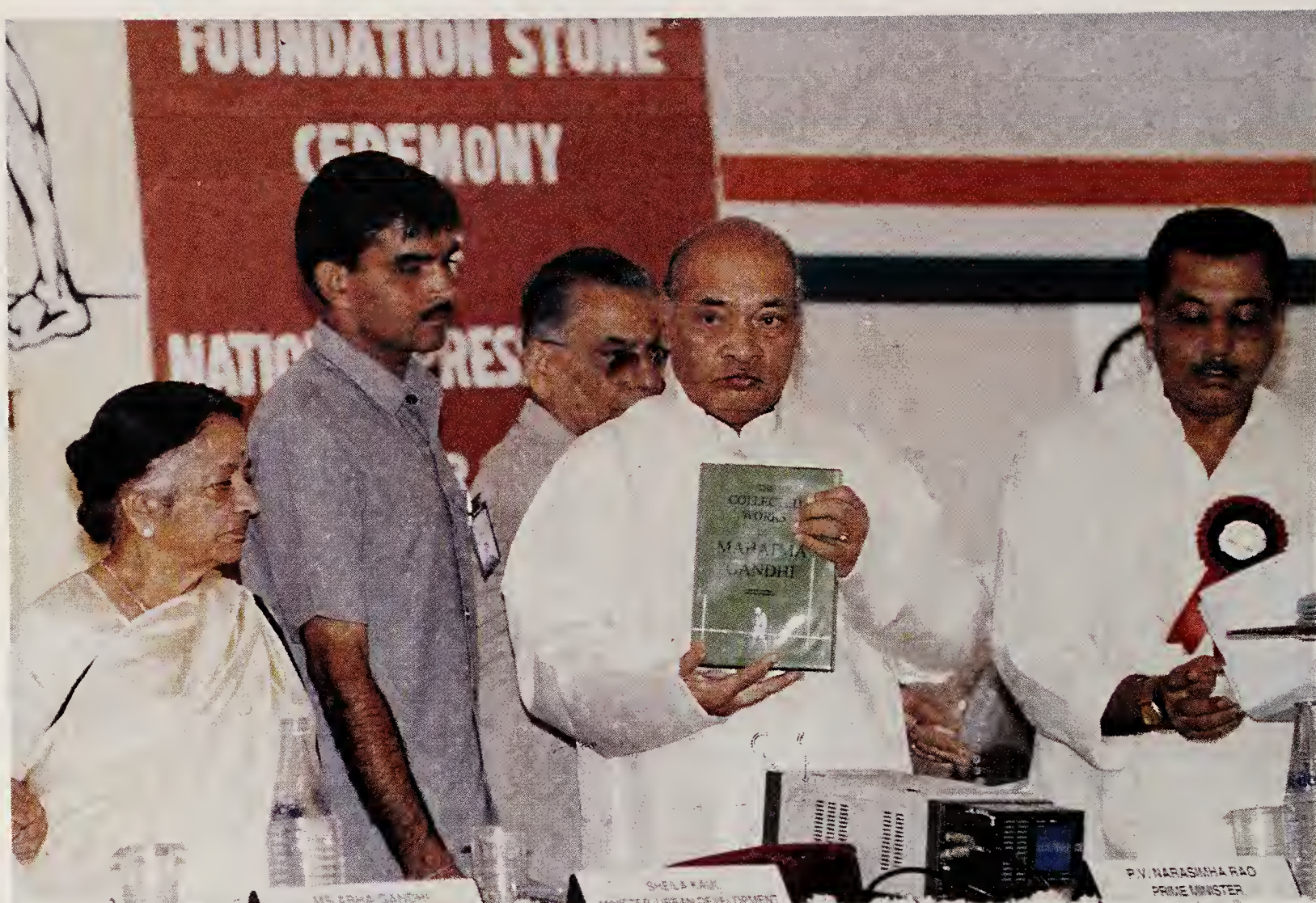
With Ms Universe Sushmita Sen, New Delhi, 14 September 1994



*Speaking at the 74th annual session of ASSOCHAM,
New Delhi, 17 September 1994*



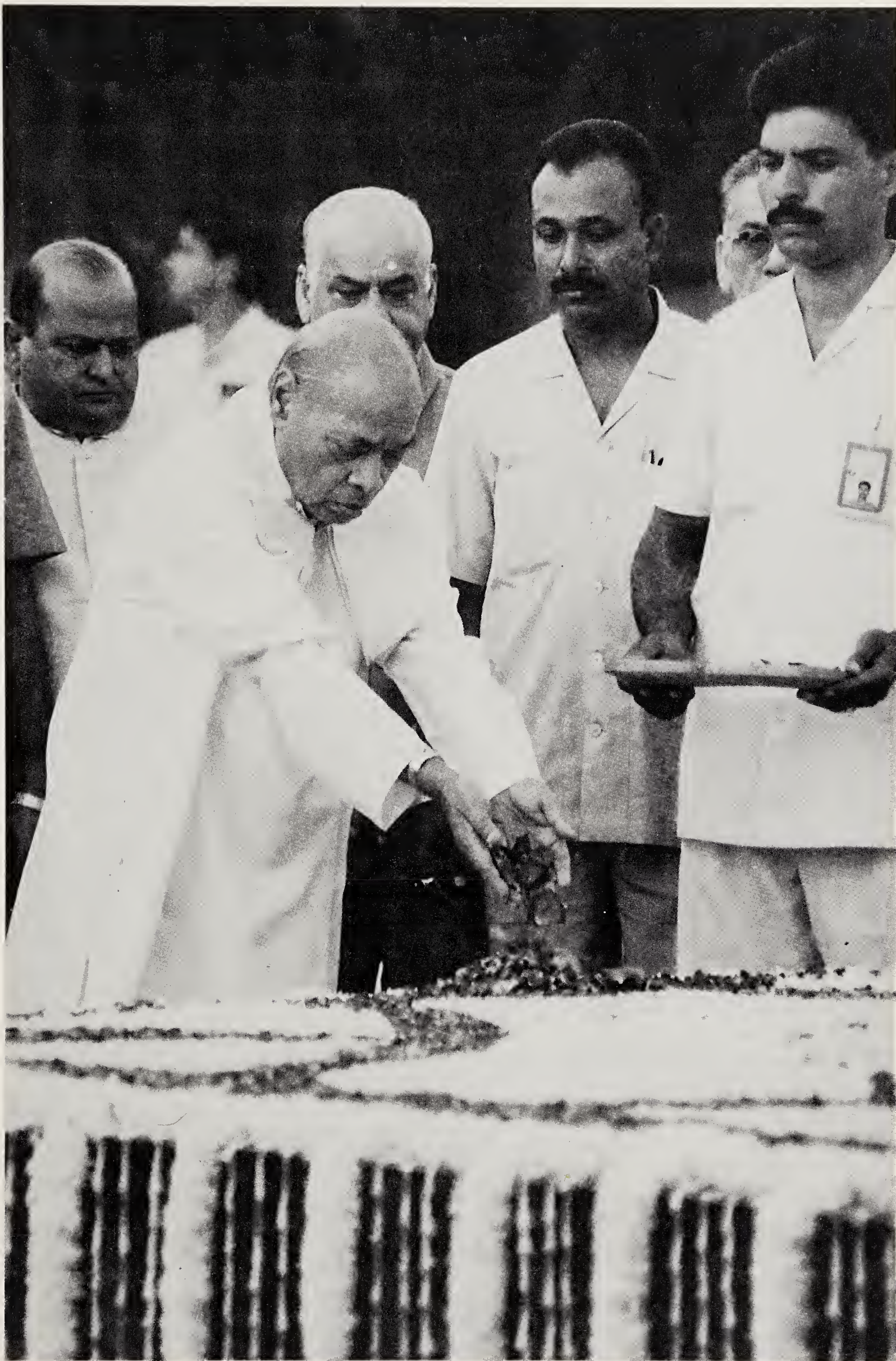
*Going round the flood affected village of Pipri in
Maharashtra, 29 September 1994*



Releasing the 100th Volume of The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, New Delhi, 1 October 1994



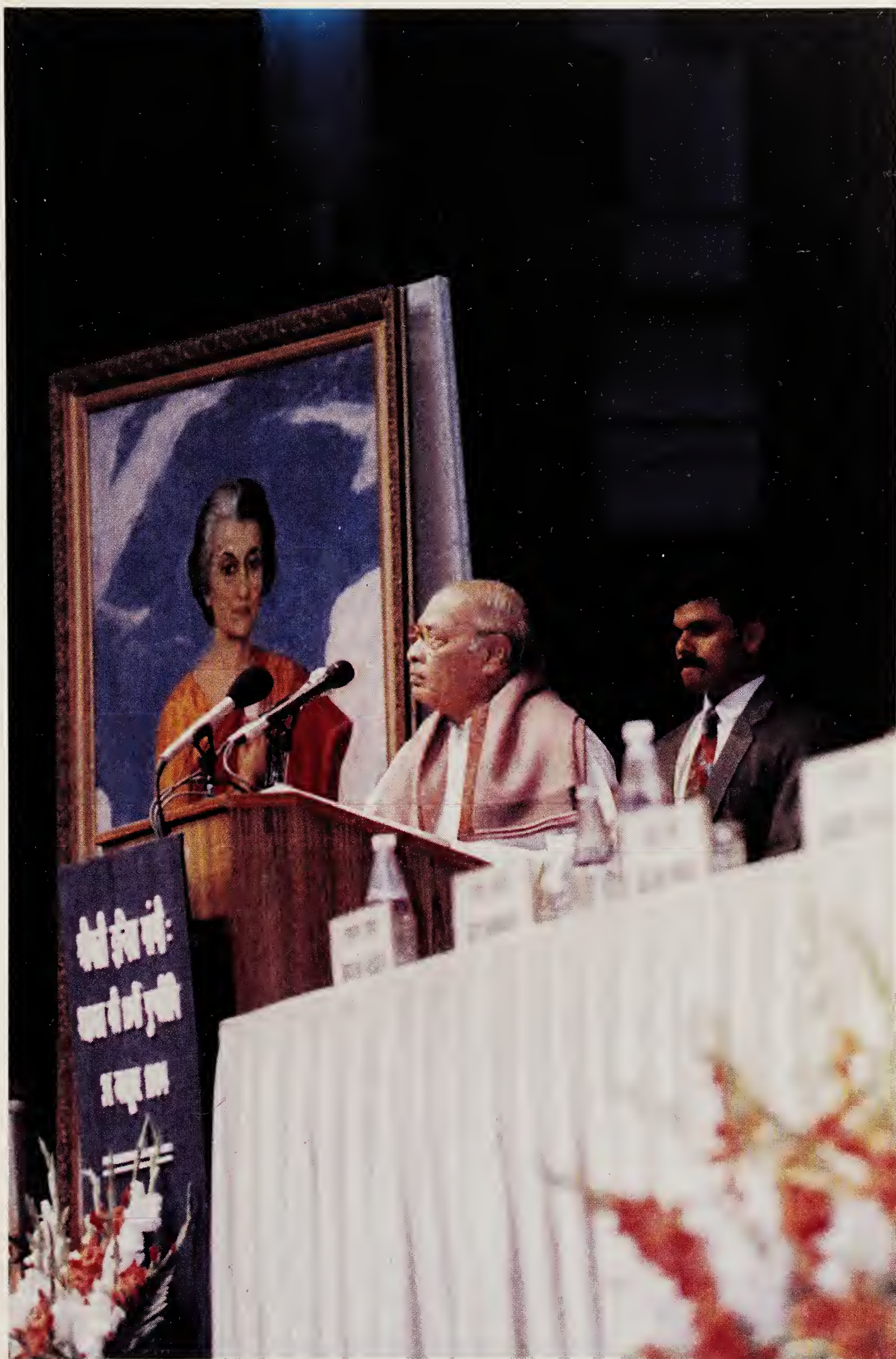
Laid the foundation-stone of National Press Centre, New Delhi, 1 October 1994



Paying floral tribute to Mahatma Gandhi on his 125th birth anniversary at Rajghat, Delhi, 2 October 1994



*Lighting the lamp to inaugurate the XVI International
Cancer Congress, New Delhi, 30 October 1994*



Speaking at a function to commemorate the 10th anniversary of Martyrdom of Smt Indira Gandhi, New Delhi, 31 October 1994



*Donating for Indian Red Cross Society, New Delhi,
1 November 1994*



With Mother Teresa, New Delhi, 10 November 1994



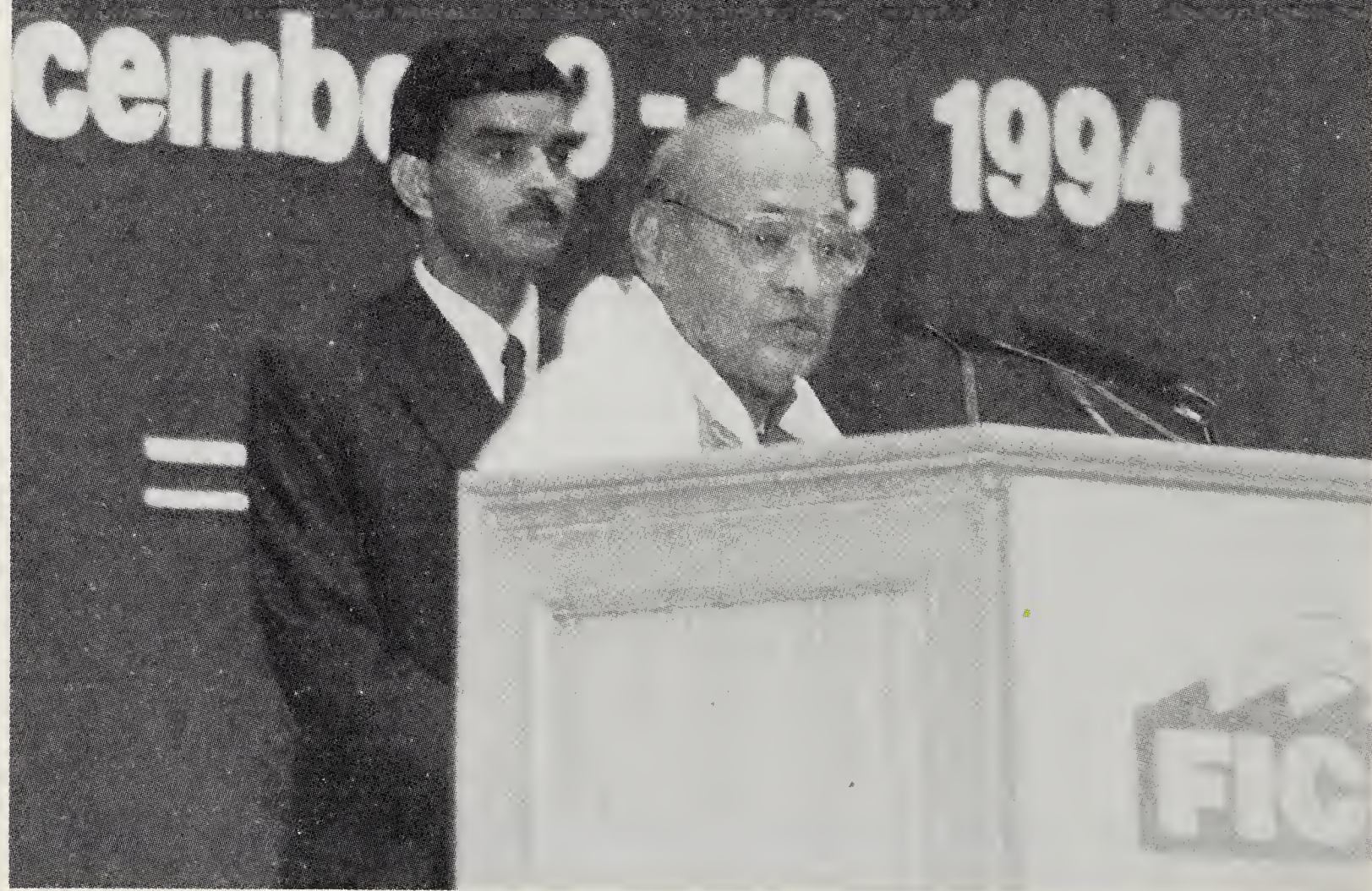
*Inaugurating the Science Exhibition organised by the
Department of Electronics, New Delhi,
14 November 1994*



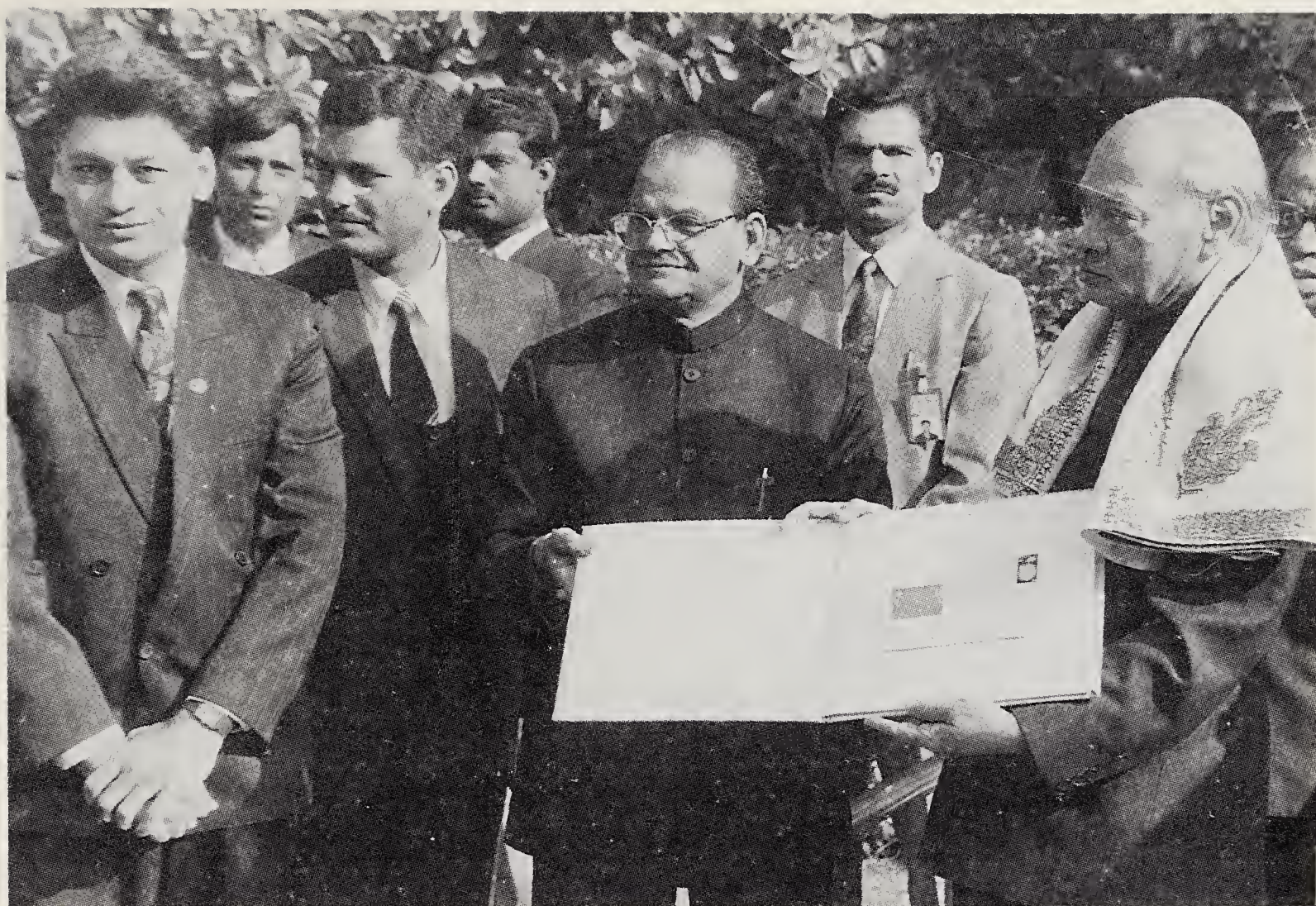
*Inaugurating India International Trade Fair, New Delhi,
14 November 1994*

67th ANNUAL SESSION

December 3 - 10, 1994



*Addressing the 67th annual session of FICCI, New Delhi,
9 December 1994*



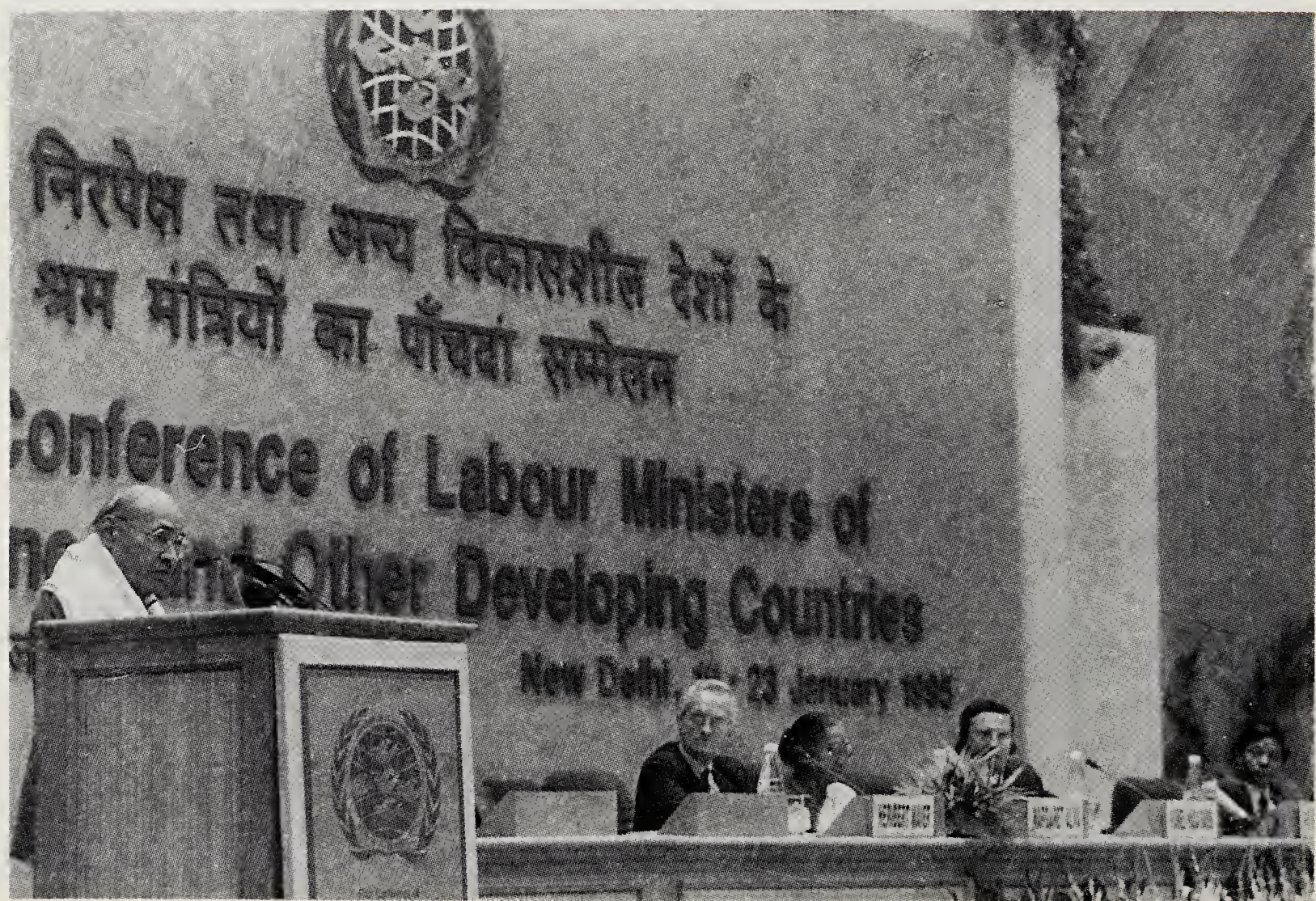
*Dedicating Satellite Money Order Service to the nation,
New Delhi, 16 December 1994*



*Inaugurating the 82nd Indian Science Congress, Calcutta,
3 January 1995*



*Addressing a gathering at the centenary celebrations of the
Confederation of Indian Industries (CII),
Calcutta, 4 January 1995*



*Addressing the fifth Conference of Labour Ministers of
Non-aligned and Other Developing Countries,
New Delhi, 19 January 1995*

requirements, whether we have spent the same amount as countries of our size are spending. We are spending less than that. To compare our defence expenditure with a small country and to say that we should not spend this much is not just. All that is required to be done for our defence will be done. Let there be no doubt in that regard.

I want to tell you that the whole world is changing but there are some places where things do not change. Some people cannot change their mind-set. Today, I am ready to set aside politics and prepared to go beyond mere political and diplomatic relations. At present, we are expanding economic relations with all. Why shouldn't we expand these economic relations within the SAARC? Why does Pakistan feel so bad about it? Why is it so much hesitant? Let us cooperate in our SAARC network of seven nations. But even this is not acceptable to them. Wherever our Pakistani friends go, they raise the Kashmir issue. I have stopped talking about Kashmir in any forum, nor do I give any reply to any question on the issue. It is not necessary for us to tread the same path they are walking upon. It is not necessary for us to reply to all the questions they raise. The world knows what they have to say and what we have to reply. People are aware of the conditions at the field level. Nothing is hidden from anybody. Only they go on unnecessarily repeating them. I understand, Pakistan is going to raise the Kashmir issue in a conference of the Health Ministers. Now raising the issue in season and out of it will attract only the derision of the world. We want to tell our friends that we share a blood relationship. For God's sake, please for the sake of our relationship, do not do this. We can solve these problems across the table. They talk of an unfinished task. What is this unfinished task? In my well-considered opinion, there is only one unfinished task from our point of view and that is the restoration of Pak-occupied part of Kashmir to India. This is the only unfinished task, nothing else remains.

If this is not acceptable to you, the Simla Agreement is there. Let us extend our hands of friendship to each other and move ahead

shoulder to shoulder. Please do not spurn these possibilities and stand in the way of a bright future that looks ahead. But it is your sweet will if you are not prepared to meet half way, we are firm on our own position. I want to tell you that Kashmir is an integral part of India and will ever remain so. I am not using the language of threat. Whatever I am saying, I am doing, is with a cool head, and with a full sense of responsibility. If language is not to change, let there be a change in intentions. Sometimes, one is obliged to use such language. If one does not do so, people around get angry with that person. I know this sort of compulsions exist at times. We do not have any such constraint. It may, however exist for some people in some countries. Still at least their intentions can be positive and peaceful. We want peace but at the same time, we want to preserve our sovereignty. There can be no compromise on these two issues.

One thing more. Our freedom struggle had a very long run. It was so because it was based on non-violence. It did not come to an end in a few months, rather it continued for years and decades. During the course, many great personalities took part in the struggle. Many of them did not live to see freedom.

But there were others who could see independent India, to which they made great contribution during and after the freedom struggle. They are all venerable souls for us. After independence, they had some differences amongst them, and they parted company, they went to form many political parties. But this does happen in a democracy. All the same, we bow to their sense of patriotism, to the role they played in the freedom struggle. We respect and revere them. On this issue, there is no question of party affiliation or party politics. It is coincidence that this year we are also celebrating the 125th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. We have chalked out an ambitious programme. The programme is based on the path shown by Gandhiji for the common good of the people. Besides, Acharya Vinoba Bhave's birth centenary falls during the next month, that is September. We also propose to celebrate it on a large scale. Acharya Vinoba Bhave was among those who tried to bring

about a revolution by following the path shown by Gandhiji. We still remember him. If we had even one hundredth part of the scholarship, originality of thought and the will to act up to it that he was endowed with, it would have done tremendous good to the country. We would naturally like to celebrate his birth centenary. Then, the birth centenary of Rafi Ahmed Kidwai is being celebrated. A Committee on this has been formed which has its own programmes. We are going to act on those programmes in a befitting way so that our youth may be made aware of such exemplary personalities.

There is also a Memorial Committee for Lok Nayak Jayaprakash Narayan. It is working for many years now but we want to give a new content to its programmes and intensify them. He had, in his own way, shown a path to the country. There is no doubt that there can be many roads which lead to the same destination. He had also shown us a path, a path of total revolution. I have studied it, so also thousands of youths of this country and others. His was not an ordinary personality but a great one. And we want to pay our tributes to him and give further impetus to his programmes. Shri Morarji Desai will be one hundred years old in coming February. Now he is 99. He is also a great patriot. He has sacrificed a lot and later became the Prime Minister of the country. But let us not look into the status he held. Let us look at the personality. One will rarely come across such a unique personality. We would like to celebrate his centenary next year. Like this, we would like to celebrate quite a few birth centenaries because we had many great leaders in this country. There might be differences of opinion among them in ideologies, in their approaches and other spheres. But they all deserve our respect. We want to celebrate birth centenaries of all these great persons so that people will understand these great personalities, who were the driving force in achieving freedom and who showed what sacrifices are required to strengthen and safeguard it. People must know about them and learn from their lives.

I have taken a lot of your time but I would like to tell you that quite a few things have been left out. In 45 minutes or one hour,

everything cannot be covered. Whenever opportunity comes, I would present before you other programmes. There are many programmes which call for a detailed description but because of time constraint, I am not able to touch upon them. I would, however, like to tell you that the country is marching ahead on the road to progress. There is no doubt about it. We should be guided by a new inspiration and a spirit of dedication. Our commitment should not be to any individual but to the future of the country and we are committed to it. As I see this spirit among millions of our countrymen, I am convinced that our country will be safe in the hands of the coming generations, in the hands of future leadership. Our job is to keep it intact and pass it on to the future leadership in a sound condition. This I would consider as my sincere and humble duty. I want to assure you that no effort will be spared by me to achieve this. Whatever difficulty I may have to face, I shall strive to accomplish this task.

The Spirit of Sadbhavana

YOU HAVE USED the slogan “Rajivji Amar Hain”—Rajivji is immortal or “Rajiv Gandhi Amar Hain” with complete meaning. This is no longer a slogan, it is now for ever a truth for our future. I congratulate all of you for doing it. When we raise the slogan “Amar Hain” in favour of someone we demonstrate our abiding respect for him. But in Rajiv Gandhi’s case, it is not merely a matter of showing respect. I think it betokens our conviction that the programme which Rajiv Gandhi gave us will always be implemented in this country and new programmes will come up to link with it. But the basic programme will be the one which Rajiv Gandhi gave us.

I feel somewhat overwhelmed by the memories which come rushing into my mind one after the other. I do not know where I should begin and where I should end. I cannot believe that we are celebrating Rajiv Gandhi's birthday three years after his death. We find it difficult to think on those lines. We cannot believe that Rajiv Gandhi is not in our midst; it is more difficult when we realise that whatever we are doing is the task he had begun. We have full faith that whatever the physical situation may be, he is with us and will be with us. We are celebrating the day today as Sadbhavana Day throughout the country. We do it because it is Rajiv Gandhi's birthday today. But it is not merely a ceremonious fulfilment.

The day could have been called by some other name. This is a matter which we have to understand in some depth. Rajiv Gandhi's was a multifaceted personality and we could have taken any aspect of it and named the day after it. The emphasis he laid on Sadbhavana was original. I have given this much thought and he also used to think deeply. We are all thinking animals. There is, on the one hand, an individual and on the other, society or community. When there is synthesis between the individual and community there is no disorder in society. What we get is social harmony. Our *Rishis* and seers have laid stress on the perfection of the individual and his self-confidence. In modern times effort has been made to push the individual a little backward and bring society into the forefront. It was said that when society is in good shape the individual will also be in fine fettle. Earlier we used to say that if the individual is good, society will also be good.

Both the observations are all right in their respective places but what we need is to bring both statements into harmony. We have in our country some people who as individuals, are as tall as the Himalayas. But if society as a whole does not scale the same heights, the gap between the two widens so much that social differences eat into the vitals of that society. The social whole cannot then make progress. When the individual becomes a slave and there is nothing

of the society in him, the individual, as we have seen in many countries, becomes valueless and loses all importance. A synthesis between the two is our path. This is the path chosen by India, the 'Middle Path' in which both individual and society have a place. We do not like extremism in any matter because we have seen how countries which relied on it suffered. All the great thinkers in our country told us of the importance of harmony between the two different points of view.

Rajivji had understood this harmony in great depth. He grasped it in such a way that I have no answer to the question which naturally arises how anyone could think so deeply at such a young age. We learn by experience, by losing a step here and a step there. Even then, we do not learn enough. But how this young man who had not been knocked about much learnt of the importance of balance and its desirability at this age? It is difficult for us to understand it. Of course, he grasped it. In whatever he did he avoided extremism, whether in the social sphere, economic sphere or religious sphere. He tried to bring the different view points in a balanced structure.

What can be the basis of this thinking? The basis for a synthesis is that while I adhere to my view I would hold myself in readiness to listen to your point of view. Where one takes the view that one's viewpoint is the right one and what someone else says is not right and his view will not prevail, the road leads to fascism. Or it takes us to the old princely States of India, the rajas and the *badshah salamats*. The 'Middle Path' is the path of democracy in which one's point of view is stated in the most natural manner and the others' point of view is listened to. When an effort is made to find a way out of two conflicting viewpoints there is tension sometimes and tempers rise but still a way is found. For, the democratic system ultimately leads to a solution. We therefore, need the spirit of give and take, *Sadbhavana*, so that I keep my viewpoint intact but I am also ready to listen to someone else's point of view. In other words,

I am prepared to improve any mistake of mine or remove any deficiency in me.

There is the spirit of humility in it. Humility and harmony, 'Sadbhavana', are the two faces of the same coin. Rajivji's *Sadbhavana Yatra* had also the same object in mind. This country of ours is a multifaceted one, there are many languages, there are many castes and sections, there are many religions here. When a leader starts out, a young man starts out to achieve harmony, unity and synthesis among them, people in their thousands follow him and a climate is created. Sitting at home, you cannot create the climate. He, therefore, started the harmony marches and his image was boosted on the basis of the *yatras* and it acquired clarity. His acceptability among the people rose, not only his position as a leader but also the acceptability of the ideas he was propounding went up so much that he could hardly deliver his speeches after some days of the march. I know how even after 20 or 30 years in public life many leaders are not able to identify themselves with the people.

Lectures are delivered but the listeners fail to respond to them. People may throng in thousands to listen to the speakers but not everyone is able to establish a rapport between the audience and the speaker. Many deliver their addresses and many people may hear them and even think about the points made. But Rajiv Gandhi proceeded on the basis of harmony, *Sadbhavana*, and as soon as he started the march he won the hearts of the people. He became one with the people like a chemical combination. He did not have much experience of working among the people but there was no need either. If Adi Shankara could become a world leader (*Jagadguru*) at the age of thirtytwo, why could not Rajiv Gandhi become a leader at a young age and what is there to wonder at? Age hardly matters in this respect. Neither does experience. It has something to do with the inner strength of a person and Rajiv Gandhi had displayed it.

We may agree that a young leader talks about the youth and Rajiv Gandhi did talk about the problems of the young people and

gave the younger generation a new direction. That was hardly surprising since he was one of the young people himself. But it was not as though he showed the way only to one generation of people. He also gave direction to many older people, many thinking people and experienced people. My own experience is that he was a thinker who thought deeply about various issues. When he spoke on any issue, for which there were many opportunities, he spoke not of the superficial aspects but went deep into its intricacies and spoke after much cogitation. In fact, he was not the leader of only one generation and his thinking was not for the present only. His thinking embraced all aspects and was meant for all people. You must have also felt the same way and I have no hesitation in saying that his programme had a speciality in that it was not for only one generation of people. He, in fact, evolved a plan for the entire world.

Thus the day of Sadbhavana is not merely a day of good manners, of behaving properly with one another and saying 'adab arz' to one another. It is a much deeper thing than that. Just as one thing leads to another, harmony also thrives in society.

If in a society there are vast differences, where a person is atop a great height and the other is down in the dumps, where such wide gaps exist, whether they are economic or social, it is not possible to create harmony. If the society is built on the foundations of Sadbhavana, it is our endeavour to reduce the distance between the two extremes. When we talk of reducing the distances, we mean to establish not only more of equality but also harmony, the spirit of mixing and living together. When that prevails we move forward in our thinking and we realise that we are trying not merely to bring people together but also to reduce the distance between them and increase the degree of equality. The position of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, minorities and whatever backward classes are there is covered by it. The Congress had a tradition for a long time that if there is Sadbhavana in society and it has to be maintained we have to reduce the differences. Some people have four TV sets

in their houses and some do not have even one. There is a style of living. Let alone bank balances but the distinctions in the life style does create a gap.

How can you have harmony in such a society? We can create it when we take recourse to science and technology and make a thing costing Rs.50,000 or a lakh available for Rs.5,000 or 10,000 so that everyone could afford it. It should be our effort to reach that stage and for that we have to widen the industrial base and bring the largest number of people into this programme. This leads us to the thought of liberalisation. Rajiv Gandhi had clearly mentioned it in our 1991 election manifesto. It was stated in a paragraph. Often we miss that paragraph while we read the other parts of the manifesto. It refers to the meaning of liberalisation which is that in a system where there are too many distances between one strata and another, the rich alone can afford things which the others also desire to have.

There are thousands of examples but let me give you a small one. Some twenty years ago when we had only black and white TV sets in our houses as Members of Parliament, we were unable to enter our own house because the boys and their friends from college and school would gather together to watch films. There would be a big crowd. Now there is none because many people own TV sets, black and white, maybe small ones.

I gave you a small example. That was to tell you that our programme, the foundation of which was laid by Rajivji, is inspired by the thought that if these distinctions persist in our society then it would not be able to make progress. Since you do not have the financial resources you cannot maintain the big industries nor start new ones. You have to find the resources for the work somehow. He had formed a committee of Cabinet ministers, of which I was made Chairman, to find out how our public sector was faring. There were three or four other Cabinet ministers in it. For six or eight months we banged our heads against a wall to find a way out of the difficulties.

We did not wish that what we had been carrying on from the days of Panditji (Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru) that is, the various public sector undertakings, should be closed. But their condition was such that the funds collected from the people had to be provided to these undertakings, year after year. If that continued what would happen to the education programme, to the hospitals, what would become of the roads, of the roads in the villages, of the programmes for the poor. The anti-poverty programme was about to come to a halt. Why, because you had to build those huge factories, a majority of which were going to run at a loss anyway.

Take the case of power plants. The farmers are crying hoarse over the supply of power for only two hours or one hour and that too between two and three in the afternoon so that they start from their houses in the morning return home after running the water pump for an hour only. There would be no supply for the remaining twenty three hours and there would be power sometimes and no power at other times.

The farmers are still unhappy. What is the remedy? In our Five Year Plans we had a certain target of power generation but even half of it has not been produced and we have no money to start new power projects. So what do we do? Shall we carry on with half the power we need? Can we carry on in this manner and can our industries carry on? Some factories are closed for as long as five months simply because there is no power supply. That is our experience and yours too. Rajivji had studied this and said this would not do. The investment has to be stepped up several times and when the matter came up in small Cabinet Committees and in the Cabinet itself, he said that we had to go in for liberalisation. Without it the work will not go on. If he were with us today, he would have pushed it ahead much faster but we are doing it in any case.

I have presented an example of how an idea has become all-inclusive and has dominated all aspects of life as you develop the

theme of harmony. No man is immortal and we know of life and death both. But what pains us is the fact that someone who had to live much longer and give leadership to the nation is no longer in our midst. We have, however, to carry on this task and that is what we are doing. In future too, this task will be performed with greater vigour. I am sure of it and the people in the Congress party have this onerous responsibility.

I wish to draw your attention to another fact. Rajivji was much attached to the computer. Some of us used to say to one another, “Thank God, my name does not figure in Rajivji's computer.” Why did Rajivji always keep the computer before him and why did he operate the computer himself? All the information that we had was fed into the computer. This was not a matter of a hobby because he did not keep a computer for the sake of a hobby. It was not a fashion that he was following. But as back as 1985 he had realised that the age of computers was coming. And while the other nations would be making their own computers we could not afford to work on our old machines and typewriters. He tried to introduce a new age in our country. Many of our people did not see the importance of computers and asked what this new thing was. Now we all have realised its importance and software is being produced in Bangalore and other places worth crores of rupees and some of it is even exported.

Many at that time did not realise its importance but now people all over understand the importance. Now there is need for greater encouragement to the computer programme. I talked over the matter with Shri Arjun Singh and others as to what should be done. This has to be done in the Ministry of Human Resource Development under Shri Arjun Singh. We have now decided that we will establish a National Institute of Computer and Allied Technology in the name of Rajiv Gandhi. I will just read out a couple of sentences about it. It will be a fully funded accommodation Institute under the Ministry of Human Resource Development. There is no need to approach

anyone for funds. We, as Government, can do it. An estimated expenditure of approximately Rs.4 crore will be provided in the remaining period of the Eighth Plan for setting up this Institute. By spending another Rs. 40 crore in two years, more if necessary, we can complete the project in two years as a full-fledged institute. This is its outline. We will not spare any effort and will bring in experts from anywhere in the world where such experts are available for running the Institute. We will study the models for the Institute. What I wish is that we should establish a prestigious institute here where many would be attracted for study and to be admitted to which would be considered a good fortune. Because it is being established in Rajivji's name we cannot allow the quality to be lowered. It would be an excellent Institute.

What I am trying to tell you is that we are proceeding on the lines he had indicated and have been following the various programmes he had chalked out. We know that when we move forward we do not always go along a straight line. That never happens. Actually new avenues open up and several vistas are seen. The sapling which was planted by Rajivji does not rise up to the sky but it has branches, big and small, and it is spreading in all directions like a big banyan tree. We have to accept that new programmes would appear as we go ahead. We are marching forward in all areas of human activity.

Rajivji used to say that medical science today is becoming complicated. Many small things are exported from India. People come from abroad and buy up things like roots and herbs at throwaway prices. On the Himalayas, the Vindhyas and other mountains which are referred to in our *Puranas* and the epics there are all kinds of herbs. In the *Ramayana* when Lakshmana became unconscious the Sanjivani herb was not found in Lanka and Hanuman had to fly all the way to the Himalayas to fetch it. We find it difficult to believe that today, but what is true is that in our country and in some other countries such rare things are not available everywhere but they have to be searched.

Recently, I read a book on Vietnam. A doctor told me that in Vietnam a lot of research work has been done on the herbs and roots available there. Although the people were involved in a war for decades during which there were many ups and downs such a book has been published. This book contains information about 200 herbs and roots out of which some fifty or sixty are found in India. Now we would think that we in India, China, Vietnam and other countries in the region should get together and chalk out a programme about preserving and using the herbal resources. This has its origin in Rajivji's thought that we should not give up what we have in our tradition. On the basis of that tradition you can do many things. Your wealth is not confined to what you apparently have. No researcher starts with the view that what he knows is all that is there to know. If he does it he remains where he is. His progress and development would come to a stop. He must go on searching for truth and knowledge.

That is why we must bear in mind what Rajivji had said that we should not give up our tradition. Go ahead with the assets in your own tradition and seek a synthesis of things brought in from outside with the things which you have. By all means bring in those things from outside wherever they might be available. But link it up with your own inheritance and make something new which would be your own. The coming together of the things which you have and the ideas and objects borrowed from outside would result in an amalgam which would become yours and it would be Indian. This is how you can make progress.

Many of these tasks have their roots in Rajivji's thoughts and new things are then linked to them. They are, however, not the original ones. This is what Rajivji had told us. Some of his ideas were in a formative stage. We have to carry on our work on the basis of his thoughts and go forward. We are observing this day in the name of harmony, equality, synthesis and equal respect for all, whether in the matter of religion or something else. We have to

ensure that the younger generation must be properly influenced by these ideas and if they work devotedly to put the programme into practice the observance of the Sadbhavana Day would have achieved its purpose.

Democracy—Key to Nation Building

I THANK THE Rajiv Gandhi Foundation for inviting me to preside over the inauguration of the first of the series of the symposia to commemorate the fiftieth birth anniversary of Shri Rajiv Gandhi. The Rajiv Gandhi Foundation has diversified into a wide range of philanthropic activities in a short period since its inception. It has established itself as one of the premier institutions, promoting academic exchanges on issues of national and global concern and encouraging excellence in intellectual pursuits. It has also made a mark in conducting development programmes for the underprivileged. I cannot think of a more appropriate homage to the memory of this great son of India who died three years before we could celebrate his fiftieth birth anniversary.

The topic selected for the inaugural symposium, “Ethnicity, Pluralism and Conflict Resolution in Nation Building” is not country-specific but it has a distinct applicability to democracies, especially new democracies and, I am certain, it has been phrased keeping India and the secular and democratic ideals of Rajiv Gandhi in mind. It is largely in this context that I intend to dwell upon this subject. I think, that the topic applies primarily to democracies

because it is only in democracies that ethnicity and pluralism are recognised and celebrated and conflicts are sought to be resolved rather than suppressed. Fascism promotes the supremacy of one category of people, ideology or cultural trait. Of course, while ethnicity and pluralism are related, I do not believe that conflict necessarily arises from them or from them only. Hence, I shall treat them sequentially without attributing any casual inevitability to the sequence.

Ethnicity relates to social groups which form part of a larger population but may be distinguished by common ties of race, language, religion or culture. Ethnic identities may have primordial roots though in many cases these may have been subsumed under more modern identities. Ethnic diversity within states is a fact of the contemporary world. The modern state aims at ensuring political unity by forming an appropriate framework which gives suitable avenues of expression and development to all composite groups. As the world comes closer, ethnicity is bound to grow in incidence and variety. Ethnicity is a very complex phenomenon. Like all other social phenomena, it changes with time and place. Politically, it embodies both positive and negative features. On the positive side, it acts as a social bond which helps an individual appreciate his roots in a community. It provides emotional support which is particularly important in urban mass societies. On the negative side, it is the connotation in which the self-identity is perceived and defined in terms of what distinguishes one community from another. This negative self-definition is a feature of some communities and newly formed countries that are unable to find any other mooring and tend to exaggerate their differences from others, often in hostile terms.

Pluralism in our context today would largely be social pluralism but, it could also consist of other dimensions such as those pertaining to theology and legal issues. These dimensions often coexist with social pluralism and make the phenomenon even more

complex. Social pluralism recognises the multiplicity of associations in communities in all their colourful manifestations and the nation denotes a harmonious whole. The traditional definitions of nationhood tended to highlight one or another social characteristic as an essential anchor to hold the nation together. This characteristic would then be emphasised and imposed on others. In this arrangement, a deliberate inequality was enforced and justified. This interpretation of nationhood has fortunately now given way to a more realistic recognition of egalitarian pluralism in democracy.

A rich associational life is essential to democracy. Associations serve to educate citizens in political life, strengthen their relations with the state and help to ensure that no single interest becomes dominant. Their right to exist flows from the fundamental rights of individuals. Their interplay provides information, discussion, negotiation and compromise which are all essential stages of decision making in democracy and help public decisions to be more rational and acceptable than they would otherwise be.

Conflict is an unavoidable facet of human life. It is as much an internal process of the human mind when it evaluates the pros and cons of a decision as it is a part of the individual's daily interaction with others in society. Some philosophers have attributed all progress to the continuous process of conflict and conflict resolutions. The absence of conflict may be an impossible condition to reach and it may often mean brutal repression or callous indifference by one section vis-a-vis the rest. The maturity of a society is thus measured not so much by the absence of conflict in it as the stability of its institutions and procedures for resolving them. The more broad-based and impartial this mechanism, the less is the likelihood of discontent and disaffection festering in it. The state with its organised judiciary is the final arbiter of all conflicts but there always exist traditional means of settling matters at the level of the family and the community and most issues do get resolved at these levels.

Conflicts arise, when groups perceive themselves as being the subject of discrimination with reference to another group. The demands may relate to control over resources, territory, demand for self-governing rights or even cultural rights. The issues may not be one of lack of development, but relative under-development in comparison to another ethnic group. This self-perceived and often justified notion of second class treatment provides a base for political mobilisation within the ethnic groups and could assume dangerous proportions when this mobilisation becomes exclusivist and precludes any compromise. Leaders emerge, who may have sometimes genuine and sometimes cynical and personal or even pecuniary motive, in strengthening the ethnic identity which may at times tantamount to be at the expense of the broader identity of the composite state.

Undemocratic forms of government seek to justify themselves by creating myths of the superiority of one elite group of people over all others. The existence of pluralistic democracies, however, is a constant challenge to the other's exclusivist ideology; but the latter often instigates trouble, the former by taking advantage of their liberal and free atmosphere. Liberal democracies have always had to face up to this threat or face the risk of succumbing to fascism. This task is never easy because it is always possible to provoke a small faction to violence and try to give it the garb of a popular movement, particularly so when a plural society is undergoing transformation such as economic development. Change leads to a narrowing of social space. It creates a gap between achievement and expectations. Old social structures and safety nets fall apart. New social differentials emerge. All these accentuate discontent and sometimes lead to a backlash in its negative form.

Issues concerning ethnicity and pluralism have gathered considerable importance in international affairs in recent years, especially after the cold war which has led to new nations and fragmentation of existing nations. There continues to be a consistent

effort to look closely at the problems of minorities constituting the larger mosaic of pluralistic states; such scrutiny has come largely from many professing to belong to unitary nation-states, though, in fact, there are few such howsoever the term may be defined.

India has demonstrated in practice for millennia the philosophy of unity in diversity long before we became a nation-state. And the modern state of India, which is multiethnic, multicultural, multilingual and multireligious, continues to be living proof of the dynamism and the vibrancy which can be imparted to a society with different strands. Experience of such large multiethnic states has shown that democracy is one of the most potent instruments for containing and moderating ethnic conflict. In this regard, India stands as one of the best examples of conflict-resolution through the democratic process. Pluralism, federalism and a developmental process with emphasis on economic and social uplift of the underprivileged sections of society, have resulted in diverse groups acquiring a stake in the process of nation building, as a whole. Therefore, within the context of democracy and development, ethnic groups residing in various parts of India have become the building blocks not the road blocks, to the development of the Indian nation. This is one of the most important achievements of the Indian Constitution which has provided the legal framework for nation building. There are setbacks, there are false steps on the way but the direction is set and the goal is clear.

We have been extremely fortunate in India in our rich and diverse heritage which has contributed immeasurably to producing a vibrant culture and nation. We must recognise the importance of sustaining in every way the processes of democratic dialogue to enhance the quality of our society. At the same time we have to be alert to the dangers which afflict multiethnic, multireligious, multilingual, pluralistic states. Aside from a lack of understanding and the dynamics of such states among some people, we have the recent increasing phenomenon of terrorism by which a microscopic

few wish to impose their fiat in the name of larger majorities, often with cynical external assistance. The challenges and opportunities which face such nations have been described in the Moscow Declaration signed in June this year. Ultimately, however, what would matter is the will of the state and its determination to retain democratic norms which alone safeguards the future for composite states. The stability of pluralistic states is a valuable contribution to the security of the world and to the task of international co-operation.

With the recent experience behind us of the horrible consequences of unbridled ethnicity, thinking people around the world are awakening to the fact that while it is the duty of the state to ensure that fair treatment is given to all its composite elements, there should be no moral support to processes of disintegration based on spurious distinctions between peoples and nations.

It is notable that the UN Declaration of 1992 on the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities does not condone activities which run contrary to the territorial integrity and political independence of states.

Africa, a victim of arbitrary colonialism, has demonstrated its understanding in the OAU (Organisation of African Unity) Declaration of 1993 on the mechanism of conflict prevention, management and resolution. The recent Managua Declaration, while severely condemning all terrorist acts, expresses the utmost respect for the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, and inviolability of borders and compliance with international treaties as indispensable for the development of democracy. Democracy is, in fact, the key essential in conflict-resolution and nation building, particularly in pluralistic states. It is only within a democratic framework that the aspirations of all constituent elements can be fulfilled. It is only through mutual understanding, mutual respect and the processes of dialogue that genuine grievances can be

removed and the miasma of misperception dissipated. Conflicts and differences cannot be removed by government decrees alone nor can the energy of diverse elements channelised towards nation building except through the means and methods available within a democratic framework.

Shri Rajiv Gandhi well understood this complex interplay between ethnicity, pluralism and nation building. We had many long discussions, particularly when we were thrashing out the New Education Policy in 1985-86. I remember the long hours which he devoted for one policy among so many and the way in which he analysed the subject of ethnicity and the subject of secularism in India. This is something which I will never forget. It was very much out of the ordinary and that is what really makes his vision of India something qualitatively different. He realised that a delicate balance has to be maintained between diversity and disintegration, control and freedom, and unity and uniformity.

I am sure, these symposia organised by the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation will be able to go into these issues in greater depth than I have been able to do today and offer useful suggestions to the countries which believe in democracy and freedom.

Railways : the Great Means of Communication

I AM VERY happy to be associated with this function today. This is the programme in which I have participated more than any other programme in several places in India, north, south, east and west

Speech on the occasion of inauguration of broad gauge railway line between Chitradurga and Rayadurg, Chitradurga, 31 August 1994

and I congratulate Jaffer Shariefji for having taken up this massive programme in this country.

You know that this country, before it became free, had lots of Indian States, princes, rajas, maharajas, nawabs and so on, and therefore they had all kinds of gauges in their railways, some narrow gauge, some meter gauge, some broad gauge. That is how after independence, we find that we have only one broad gauge from north to south running from Jammu Tawi right down to Madras and Bangalore and only one line, all the other lines, the parallel lines, particularly in the west of India are meter gauge. This is becoming a very big problem in the traffic movement and also in the speedy travel of people. You can also see that where there is no broad gauge and where there are only other gauges, small guages, the industrial development of this country has been left behind. From the security point of view also unless you have several lines of the same gauge, you cannot transfer trains from one line to the other. Therefore security-wise it is absolutely essential that we have a single gauge in the whole country.

So after my Government took over in Delhi in 1991, the earliest decision which I took along with Mr Jaffer Sharief was to start this conversion programme, conversion from all other gauges to broad gauge in a very large measure and we have almost half of the entire length of meter gauge and other gauges in this country being broadened within the first five years that is, within the Eighth Five Year Plan. I would like to complete the programme even earlier than 10 years, the whole programme, if I have money, if I have some kind of assistance coming, contribution coming from any quarter and I am very happy to say that I do have some ideas of getting money from outside and intensifying this programme so as to complete it in less than 10 years if possible.

Apart from the necessity of having a single gauge, this gauge conversion programme has a great employment potential and I am

glad to say that the full employment potential is being seen as the work is going on. I am sure that this will give even more employment when it goes ahead in other areas. Because the areas are not of the same kind, there are areas which are much more difficult where more difficult work has to be done and more employment is to be given. So this is perhaps one of the programmes in which the largest number of people are involved in employment. They are only going on with the lines right now with conversion of the lines probably other work of buildings also would come, the buildings of the stations and the staff and so on. So much of need, so much of other work needs to be done after this. I have concentrated, Jaffer Shariefji has concentrated on the line itself because that is the first thing to be completed but all the others will follow or be taken up simultaneously. So once again I would like to express my happiness at this very important programme that has been taken up after a long time, after we became free. I promise you, this programme will be completed in the shortest possible time.

I am very happy to be here in Chitradurga. I did come here once or twice before, but now for the first time to meet you all and do a good programme, I am very happy and feel that I should be coming here again and again because I have some peculiar connection with all backward areas in this country. I come from an area just like this. I know the conditions of this area as you have described. But even without your description, I can understand what a great need for irrigation is felt in areas like this. During my entire career as a political worker, whether as MLA or an MP, I have always represented backward areas, drought-prone areas, dry areas like your area here. So I understand the desire of the people for water and I do hope that Mr Moily, who has been telling me that he also understands the desire for water, will be able to find a way to get water to this area which is the first necessity as I see.

We have a series of Durgas here—Kalyandurga, Rayadurga, Chitradurga—and these are the areas where we had great kings,

brave kings. You had the Madakarinayaka here. This is the land of Madakarinayaka, this is the land of Onake Obavva and this is the land of brave people and at the same time spiritual people. This area is historic, this is the area of Krishnadevaraya, this area has the confluence of two languages, Telugu and Kannada. This area, really, is full of the highest form of culture of these two languages and I am happy to be here amongst you. You know that Krishnadevaraya was a great king who conquered many lands but at the same time conquered the hearts of the people by his scholarship and by his patronage of scholarship. The great poets of Telugu and Kannada who worked in his Asthana have made these two languages immortal and the literature immortal. This is how in those days kings, maharajas, and the rulers patronised culture. Now there are no kings, no maharajas. Today, we have to do the same thing through the bodies elected by the people. Therefore I appeal to you, I tell you to preserve our ancient culture, also our culture which is growing and our culture which is taking new shapes. No culture remains stagnant forever in the same shape. Therefore everything is changing and our culture, the cultural front also is changing. I am sure that we will be able to preserve all this great heritage of this area and of the country.

To bring people together the Railways are a great source, are a great means of communication and I am sure that this broad gauge which will come here or which has already come, will prove to be a boon to the people of the area and will serve you in all possible ways.

Rajiv's World — a Treasure for Posterity

FOR THOSE OF US who had the privilege of working with Rajivji, this is a moving occasion. Memories of the precious moments we spent in his company are fresh and require no special effort at revival, but in moments such as these, those memories come alive with an overpowering presence, memories of a man and his world to which our world today owes so much.

History is the story of people, of their leaders and of the forces that move them. The true measure of a great leader is his capacity to move these forces and lead his people to their desired goal. He does not wait for events, he makes them happen. Rajivji was such a leader. He led from the front and moved at a breathtaking pace with astounding energy. He galvanised the country to move forward with him. He unbound and released its talent and entrepreneurship. Those were times of tireless activity, times of change, times of creative thinking. Rajivji gave us his youthful energy and his vision of India in a world where it enjoyed its rightful place. Only few leaders can so captivate the people with him on imagination. Rajivji did this with exquisite skill. In him the people saw a leader in whom they could repose full confidence and trust.

Soniaji has done us great service by capturing those precious moments of Rajivji's life and the pictures speak for themselves, they are not actually pictures. They are speaking pictures of what he caught. Whenever he glimpsed something he had the photograph which is a reproduction, not only of the form but also of the content of what he saw. I remember one such occasion when the whole

Cabinet held a meeting in Sariska, Rajasthan. We were promised many things and amongst those things, the most important was that we would be able to see a tiger. After the meeting we set out in jeeps and Rajivji was ready with his camera. We were looking right, left in the darkness whatever we could see. Somebody thought it was a tiger but it happened to be something else and like that for about 2 hours we roamed around, drove around. Somehow the tiger didn't oblige and Rajivji was very disappointed and so were all of us. So the person was able to see the subjects so quickly and in photography this quickness is very essential.

You cannot get people for things coming together for your leisurely photograph. Only our photographers sometimes want us to shake hands with others, many times over if they are not ready. We have to shake hands once again.

Rajiv's World is a treasure for posterity. A book such as this brings forth the person as he really was and the world as he really saw it. It gives us a vivid picture of his life and his activities, his love of nature, his close family ties, his affection for children, his warmth for people, his concern for the poor. All these qualities that so endeared him to the people have been portrayed sensitively in the book. This book is not merely the memories of a wife. It is also a homage by a grateful nation to a leader who sacrificed so much for it. For me, it will be a personal remembrance which I will always cherish.

I thank Soniaji for this loving gift to all of us.

Gandhiji's Writings : a Promise for a Better World

THE HUNDRED VOLUME-SET of the Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi containing chronologically almost all that Mohan Das Karamchand Gandhi wrote and spoke over sixty years of his very active public life is perhaps the world's biggest multi-volume-venture.

It was in February 1956 that the scheme for collecting and compiling Gandhiji's spoken and written words was launched by the Government of India in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. It emanated not merely from a sense of requiting the nation's debt to the architect of its freedom but from a conviction that all the writings, speeches, interviews and letters of Mahatma need to be collected and published for the benefit of posterity.

Ironically, Gandhiji himself never believed that his thought could spread through books. What he said was this, "Indeed it will be propagated best through being lived. Truth and non-violence are propagated in this manner. If you place a million books on one-side and a living example on the other, the value of the example will be greater. Books are life-less."

It was at the instance of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru that the project of the Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi came into being. Panditji realised that an omnibus collection such as this would be open to the criticism that it contained much that was casual or trivial. But he made a very perceptive observation when he wrote

Speech while releasing the 100th volume of The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi and laying the foundation-stone of National Media Centre, New Delhi, 1 October 1994

in the foreword: "Sometimes it is the casual word that throws more light on a person's thinking than a more studied writing or utterance... A word to a child; a touch of healing to a sufferer was as important as a resolution of challenge to the British Empire."

This project was undertaken as a part of the publishing activity of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting as the task was beyond the resources of private publishers or institutions at least at that time. Thus the Publications Division was entrusted with this solemn responsibility. The first Chief Editor was Dr Bharatan Kumarappa. The works are being published in English and Hindi in separate series. The corresponding Hindi series is entitled, "*Sampurna Gandhi Vangmaya*." Gandhiji wrote profusely under his own name or initials or even anonymity. He wrote in Hindi, Gujarati and English. At times, if his right hand got tired, he would write with his left hand.

His writings and speeches lay not only in the few books he wrote or published during his life time but also in the dusty files of government departments and organisations besides old newspapers and journals. Sometimes, the verbatim reports of his public speeches faithfully taken down by the men of the Central Intelligence Department and filed in secret records of former Provincial governments had come in handy for a fuller version of what Gandhiji spoke. I think, we must be grateful to the C.I.D. of those days. Like the letters scattered all over the world, all these surviving records from innumerable sources had to be traced and utilised for the publication before they perished or were lost.

These articles, speeches, interviews and letters tell the story of an epic life dedicated to the freedom and regeneration of India. They build the picture of a many-faceted personality that is of absorbing human interest. Gandhiji wrote with great felicity but more significantly; he wrote fearlessly and frankly. Each word, each turn of phrase and each sentence of his, gives a deep insight into the contemporary world and how we can make it better.

Mahatma Gandhi illuminated a vision of the world that most of us yearn for often without knowing it deep within our hearts. His writings will live on as a profound source of understanding and inspiration available to all who are striving to build a better world. He also showed the kind of greatness that you find in very few people when he called his autobiography not by the name of *Autobiography* but by the name of the *My Experiments with Truth*. Now this is the height of humility and at the same time what we really read in that autobiography. Those experiments in truth are memorable and we all cherish. Once a person reads that book; he will always cherish it; the content of the book which inspires all of us.

As the first President of India, Dr Rajendra Prasad put it in his message to the first volume of the series, "No one who takes a dip into Gandhiji's stream of life as represented in this series will emerge disappointed for there lies in it buried a hidden treasure out of which everyone can carry as much as he likes according to his own capacity and faith."

A monumental work such as this cannot be completed without the selfless and tireless dedication of many people and many institutions. I thank each one of them for making this historic venture possible. I particularly compliment Dr O.P. Kejariwal of the Publications Division for ensuring that it could be completed by the 125th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

Mahatma Gandhi's life was intimately associated with journalism. He edited three journals and wrote regularly from the launching of his first publication, *Indian Opinion* in 1904 in South Africa till his martyrdom. In India he edited *Navajeevan*, *Young India* and *Harijan*. He used the power of his writing very effectively as a weapon to mobilise the people against British rule. He used it equally effectively as a vehicle for his ideas on every subject close to his heart and of relevance to the people.

I deem it a great honour to be called upon to lay the foundation-stone of the National Media Centre on the eve of Mahatma Gandhi's 125th birth anniversary. As for the Centre, if its foundations are laid on such an auspicious day, it carries with it a solemn responsibility to live upto the occasion. It will have to serve not merely as a hub for media activities and provide all necessary facilities to media persons but also develop an institutional character which inspires them to attain the lofty standards that journalism was taken to by Mahatma Gandhi and other freedom fighters of his time.

Gandhiji's unwavering commitment to truth is an ideal that the media today must keep as a constant source of inspiration and guidance. What Gandhiji wrote to his son Manilal Gandhi, when the latter became the editor of *Indian Opinion* in South Africa will always serve as a beacon to all who choose this noble profession. His advice was, "You should write what is truth. Do not give way to anger. Be moderate in your language. If you err, do not hesitate to confess it."

I hope, the National Media Centre will be constructed soon and I am happy to be associated with this function.

Indira Gandhi: a Source of Inspiration for Every Indian

TODAY WE ARE observing the tenth anniversary of the martyrdom of Shrimati Indira Gandhi. Ten years have passed since that dark chapter in our history when violence and vengeance overtook our better sense and caused incalculable loss to the country. Indiraji dedicated her life to the nation from organising the Vanar Sena to helping the freedom fighters in exchanging information. To her last day in life, Indiraji dedicated every moment to the welfare of the people and the progress of India.

Indiraji visualised an India where people of all religions lived in harmony and peace. She said that the people of all religions have equal rights and must get equal respect and protection. She fought all her life against communalism. She said: “Communalism is a blot on the nation which lets loose passions turning friends into foes.”

Indiraji had a special concern for the poor and the down-trodden people. She once observed that improvement of peoples' lives is the first duty of any government. Indiraji's determination to eradicate poverty echoed in the famous slogan *garibi hatao* and has led to many poverty alleviation programmes since then. We all have to fight unitedly to remove poverty from our country to make the dream of Indiraji a reality. This is a continuous programme. It will go on and on and on because it is not easy to achieve the eradication of poverty within a short time. It will take time; it will take an enormous effort on the part of all of us.

Her life was and continues to be an inspiration for every Indian woman. Today, in India, we have women even in the armed forces who were once considered unsuitable. Indiraji had said: “Woman in India has a special role. She is the upholder of tradition and she must also usher in modernity. Her task is to be a vehicle for social reform and bringing in of a new society.” It is in this direction of emancipation of women that we have embarked on many programmes, including reservation of 30 per cent seats in the Panchayati Raj institutions for women and also implemented the Mahila Samriddhi Yojana, Indira Awas Yojana and many other programmes specifically meant for women.

Indiraji was a world leader. She was among those great Indian leaders who were liked and loved by people not only in India but also by the people all over the world. Her views on international affairs, on world peace, on disarmament were held in high esteem. Addressing the concluding session of the Seventh Conference of Heads of Government of Non-aligned countries in 1983, Indiraji said:

“We may not agree on everything but we are of one mind that we must keep together and work together for peace, for development and for equality among nations and peoples—women and men of all races and creeds.”

This message is relevant today, as always, not only to the Non-aligned countries but to all countries of the world who cherish the ideals of peace and non-violence.

Friends, for thousands and thousands of us, each has something to remember about Indiraji. That something is unshareable. It has to remain with that individual and perish with that individual. I am sure most of us feel that way. We watched her, watched her smile, sometimes enigmatic, sometimes approving, sometimes slightly disapproving also. It is very difficult, one of those things

which could not be deciphered why Indiraji smiled; it became a world famous smile.

We admired her, it went beyond admiration—from admiration to identification. Most of us have removed the distance which is implied in admiration. We were with her, we were just following to the extent possible whatever way she showed us from time to time, through thick and thin, through all the trials and tribulations which were the real core of her struggle and life of struggle. We will never forget those moments; we will never forget those experiences.

Rajivji made a very pertinent observation when he said:

“She was mother not only to me but to the whole nation. Indira Gandhi is no more, but her soul lives, India lives.”

Indiraji's love for her country and Indians was that of a mother who cared and lived for the people. Indiraji's thoughts and words will continue to inspire us to work for the well-being of our people, for the development of India, to work unitedly for a world where everyone lives together in peace.

Let us rededicate ourselves today to work for the ideals cherished by Indiraji to the extent it is possible for the lesser mortals to do so.

Calcutta Airport

—a Gateway to the East

I CONSIDER IT my privilege to be here to inaugurate this new domestic terminal complex and rename the Calcutta Airport in honour of one of the greatest patriots of our country Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

January 23rd is an important day for our country and for Calcutta. It has a special significance. It is the birth anniversary of Subhas Chandra Bose. Netaji fired the imagination of the people, particularly of the youth, as few leaders have. He was an activist who believed in making things happen instead of waiting for them to happen. He forced the pace of events, created opportunities and led from the front. He displayed amazing energy and remarkable qualities of leadership.

While I stand before you my mind goes back, maybe 55-58 years, when we were students who first got into the spirit of the nationalist movement. In 1938 when Subhas Babu was elected the President of the Indian National Congress at the Haripura Session, I had the privilege of going there. In fact, I was a student in the old Hyderabad State, and any activity of the Congress or any association with the Indian National Congress in those days was considered treason. I remember the day when I escaped from my hostel without telling anyone where I was going along with one more friend and we went and attended the Haripura Session. Since then, I have been in the thick of the battle for freedom and it was Subhas Babu's speech, that fervent call to the nation, that fired the imagination of lakhs and lakhs of youth like me in those days. Then came the Tripura Session after a year. We had already been

Speech while inaugurating the new Domestic Terminal Complex of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport, Calcutta, 23 January 1995

sent out of the State by the Nizam's Government. You know for what? Just for singing the *Vande Mataram* song in our hostels. We were prohibited from doing that and we were sent out of the university. It was then, that we came to Nagpur, from there we went to Jabalpur and the Tripura Session and I had the privilege, I am very fortunate to have had the privilege of being one of the volunteers in the camp looking after Subhas Babu's tent, I remember he was laid up with fever 103 and 104 degree and still he was presiding over the plenary session of the Indian National Congress there.

These are some of the moments which are so precious in our lives, we always cherish and on a personal note, I always cherish that day when I decided quietly to go to Haripura Congress. I have never regretted the day. I have been proud of that moment when Subhas Babu's fervent appeal got us into the national movement as students.

An aspect of Netaji's character that is not widely known is his deep interest in philosophy. Many of Subhas Babu's early letters to his mother and to friends echo the wisdom and the vision on the teachings of Swami Vivekananda. He chose philosophy as his major subject of study and applied himself to its serious intellectual questions. He wanted to solve what he described as the fundamental problems of life. In his autobiography *An Indian Pilgrim*, he displayed his sharp insight into philosophy. He was a man in search of truth with a mission and a cause. He said, "Truth can be only relative and we gain a full grasp of it step by step."

Netaji worked energetically at mobilizing people, first within Bengal and then in other parts of India. He served as the president of many youth and student organisations, headed a number of trade unions, served as a Member of the Bengal Legislative Council and Calcutta Corporation and as President of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee. Positions of eminence came easily to him.

But it was not these positions and offices that he hankered after. His sights were set on securing independence for the motherland and till then he could not allow his mind or body to rest. So popular was his name, so popular was his personality, so absorbing was his identification with the people and with the country, I am proud to say that in many parts of India children were named after him even along with the name Bose. We had one Subhas Chandra Bose from Andhra Pradesh who was the Member of the Lok Sabha. You would perhaps think that he came from Bengal or came from a Bengali family, no, he was named after Bengal, after Subhas Bose, because, when he was born Subhas Babu was at the height of his popularity and it is those days when people were completely identified with him. I remember those days and therefore we have a personality who has the magnetism—unmatched magnetism—for the youth of the country. I wish that magnetism would continue for the causes for which we have to live now, for the causes which we have to cherish now to build India to make it one of the foremost countries of the world. That is our real task. We do need leaders who have the magnetism to get millions and millions of people into this task.

Calcutta was in the cradle of Netaji, it was in this city of Calcutta that Netaji adorned the chair of Mayor. It was from this very city that Netaji commenced his quest for the freedom of the country. The city of Calcutta has a distinct footprint in history. It has made a laudable contribution in every facet of our nation building. It has provided leadership in social, economic and political ideas. The cultural and intellectual contribution of this great city is well known not only in India but all over the world. Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Rabindranath Tagore and several such luminaries—very hard to count luminaries—have been produced by Calcutta. I salute all of them, I salute the memory of all of them and we have to find some way of remembering them and one way of remembering them, and expressing our gratitude is to name beautiful buildings, struc-

tures and the airport after him. It does not do any great favour to him, only we are honouring ourselves by naming one of our buildings after a great son of India, and that is how I look at this naming ceremony.

We need airports, now this is what we have to understand. Pandit Nehru once very aptly said, this is a country where the aeroplane and the bullock-cart coexist. This is something we have to remember because this is a pregnant statement, pregnant with meaning that you cannot really cater to the needs of one section of people in India where you have such a multilayered society. We have to cater to the needs of the bullock-cart—the person who has the bullock-cart also—and I sometimes wonder what we have done for bullock-cart. There was a proposal to make the bullock-cart run better, run more smoothly and the burden of the bullocks seem lighter by inventing some kind of a wheel, some kind of the ball bearing. I remember many people, many engineering institutions were asked to do that. Some succeeded some did not. We are making the aeroplanes, alright, but the bullock-cart also needs to be attended to in the sense that on behalf of the bullocks of India, we have to appeal to our engineers to make their burden light.

This is all that has to be done but it has not been done still. The perfect bullock-cart has not been made so far. We have to attend to that part of it. And if our science and technology have any meaning to the people of India, to the millions of Indian people, it is there that we have to apply. In the Indian Science Congress I have been appealing to our scientists, ‘please go to a village and sit there and tell us what your science and technology can do for that village. We know what you can do for cities, we know what you can do for industries, all this is known. But what is not known and perhaps not known to you either is what you can do for villages.’ I am glad to say that our scientific community has taken up the challenge and they have done many things for the good of the people

in the villages and this is the trend which I want to grow and the trend which we all have to encourage.

Calcutta, as Mr Ghulam Nabi Azad said, is the gateway to the east and the east as you know is now better known in the world as the region of the Asian tigers. This is the region of rapid growth in today's world and has the strongest potential for the future. The airport as the gateway to such a region must match the rising standards being set by it for the world.

I am happy, that this terminal can claim such standards. After all when it comes to tigers, Bengal has its very own royal specimen to offer to the world. During the recent decade the passenger traffic through Calcutta airport has doubled and is continuing to rise. It is to serve this growing need that the airport authority has developed this new Terminal Complex. I am sure it will act as a catalyst to several other developmental projects in this great city.

Finally, I would like to reiterate that we have this parallel growth, parallel progress going on for all sections of the people in India. These are the realities. There is no use running away from the reality and I for one do not run away from any reality. We have to cater to the needs of the people. We are aware of those needs, we are doing everything possible. But whatever we are doing is not adequate and that is the characteristic of a poor country. India is a poor country. We are trying to remove poverty, to grapple with poverty in all its aspects, not only in the financial sense, not only in the economic sense, but in the poverty of education, the poverty of what one can do, to rise to the capacity that God has given him, and all those kind of different forms of poverty have to be grappled with.

We are trying our best and I am sure that this spirit of the time is one of unity, to save the integrity of the country, to save the real unity —the cultural, the political, the economic unity—

of the country. And this is what we are trying to do. Let us all combine to make this airport only a symbol of what India is doing today and what we really want to do for the entire people of India in the coming times.

Pandit Nehru : a Parliamentarian by Instinct

TODAY WE ARE witness to an event that is truly historic in dimension. The Central Hall of Parliament is being adorned with the statue of the great Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru which has been unveiled just and we are happy to be here on this occasion.

It is difficult to avoid emotion while talking about Pandit Nehru and Parliament. India's Parliament owes a great deal to him. He joined the Constituent Assembly on 2 September 1946, as a nominated Member. He was then Vice-President of the Interim Government. Since then, till he breathed his last, he was the moving force behind our nascent parliamentary democracy. He breathed life into the system, nurtured it and saw it emerge as the hub of the largest democracy of the world.

Pandit Nehru was a parliamentarian by instinct. The kind of majority he commanded in Parliament and the confidence the people of India reposed in him would have turned a lesser leader into taking the people and Parliament for granted. But Panditji was always respectful of Parliament and participated in its proceedings earnestly. He took care to protect the rights and privileges of Members and uphold the dignity of the House.

It was in this Hall that Pandit Nehru delivered his famous speech at midnight when India became independent. He was to deliver many more speeches, captivating in oratory, resplendent in pithiness and prophetic in wisdom. He rarely spoke from a prepared text, but each of his speeches was a gem of literature which people thronged in the public galleries to listen to.

Pandit Nehru showed us how to apply the parliamentary system of government to meet the needs of a large country like ours and use its authority to provide a government that is accountable to the people in its day -to-day working and at the same time has the necessary executive authority to meet the complex needs of a developing country like ours. He laid the foundations of our economic development and gave Parliament a commanding role in this process. Every institution requires healthy traditions for its smooth working, in addition to its rules and regulations. Pandit Nehru attached great importance to these traditions and conventions, many of which he himself was instrumental in starting.

In installing the statue of Jawaharlal Nehru in Parliament, we seek to honour the person who most rightfully belonged here. I deem it a great honour to be witness to this event. The presence amongst us of President Nelson Mandela makes it a particularly memorable one and we all welcome it. We are grateful to him for gracing this occasion.

Tourism for Promoting Unity

IT GIVES ME great pleasure to be here on the occasion of the XI annual convention of the Indian Association of Tour Operators. I congratulate members of the Association for their significant contribution in projecting India as an attractive tourist destination. I believe that the Association will strive hard to further improve their marketing capabilities and service efficiency with a view to bringing a sizeable share of international tourism to India.

Tourism is now one of the fastest growing industries of the world. It is already the biggest export industry today. I understand that the international tourism receipts from over 528 million tourists during 1994 amounted to US 321 billion dollars and employment is estimated at 106 million.

Tourism essentially is a social phenomenon with economic consequences. The mass movement of people across the globe and within their own countries gives rise to a number of social and economic benefits. It also provides an opportunity for the people of every nation to understand and appreciate the life styles and cultural diversities and thereby promote international understanding.

Integrative dimension of tourism is very important for us. Ours is a vast and varied country, pluralistic in food, language, custom and religion. Tourism contributes significantly to our ethos of unity in diversity as millions of our people who travel, really, build up a texture and fabric of national unity and integration. Hence, the primary importance of domestic tourism, I think, needs much more attention that it has received. We seem to be, rightly, looking for

tourist abroad because that is a foreign exchange earner. It is understandable. But inland tourism, tourism within the country, also needs to be given equal importance because we just do not know about our own country as we should. A person from Kerala would know a little more of Sri Lanka than about Assam. It is obvious. A person from West Bengal may know a little more about Bangladesh than about Karnataka.

So the vast area of this country, diversity of this country, and each State having its own distinctive features—these are things which our domestic tourism can promote in a very big way. This is not being done to the extent it should be done. Right from the class rooms, children have really no idea of how vast and varied this country. They are told about their district, their State at the most and of course in a textbook manner about the country. It is very difficult, very rare to see that they get the opportunity to have a real feel of the country by visiting places. Students, for instance, should have a much better network of internal tourism. It is not tourism actually; it is the best way of inculcating national integration at that tender, impressionable age. We will have to think about these things being organised properly by consulting, or in collaboration with the ministries concerned, the departments concerned, the State governments concerned. And I don't see why we cannot do it if only we think it necessary that this should also be done.

Years ago, about 22/25 years ago let me say, I was quite struck with the imagination of the staff and Principal of a school in Jaipur. I was Education Minister at that time and I visited Jaipur for some reasons, some conference or the other. I was taken to a higher secondary school. Each class was given the task of studying one State. I was taken to a class which was studying Andhra Pradesh. I found the depth of knowledge of those boys of 15 or 16 in some ways better than mine. This is how we give understanding of the whole country to the students. Now suppose after learning all this,

they are taken to Andhra Pradesh; what they have heard, what they have read, what they have studied, if they see with their own eyes, then that is the best way of leaving an imprint of national integration on their minds. The Tourism Department can very well undertake this in collaboration with the students, with the institutions. It can be something huge in this country. You will see students from different States coming to Delhi, coming to other States. All the time you will see the roads full of students. You can make it that big.

Today, in pilgrim tourism alone, there are 150 million people travelling within the country each year. This class of tourists require special attention. I am sure, you must have heard of 'yatra specials'. They start somewhere in the south, go to all the *Dhams* and it is a circular tour. People arrange everything, including medical attention. Food is given, everything is given. There is a long train. The train stops at the sidings while the tourists go, visit temples, mosques, and shrines and come back. Now, why is it that we cannot do it, the Tourism Department cannot do it in a more sophisticated way? Why is it that you cannot do it by chartered flights. I think that is being done but in a very small way.

About 15 years back, we used to have a round the country-Buddhist-shrines-tour, specially meant for tourists from Sri Lanka. It was a beautiful arrangement. Because they are all Buddhists, they take this country as a country to visit, a pilgrimage. Now what happened? After conditions deteriorated there for some reason, this thing stopped. I told them, "Why should this stop? You may have your difficulties, we may have ours, but why should a tourist, why should a Buddhist pilgrim from Sri Lanka who wants to visit Bodh Gaya once in his lifetime be allowed to die without going there?" It had some effect. There were some attempts to start this. But then again it just petered out.

This is how different areas of tourism can be developed for people with different motivations. There is a religious motivation,

a cultural motivation, a scholastic motivation and, of course, the normal tourist motivation of going to some place having good time and coming back. All these are natural to human beings. All these have to be taken into account by those who are incharge of tourism.

Nature has given an enviable position to India in terms of its tourism resources which are immense. The historical and cultural mosaic of our country is, indeed, unique. Our civilization is an amalgam of Vedic, Islamic and Western streams. our monuments, sculptures and paintings reflect this harmonised diversity. Our topography is both colourful and varied. The lofty Himalayas inspire human spirit to divine heights. Our beaches are comparable to the best in the world and possess an irresistible combination of sun, sand and sea. We have a chain of national parks and bird sanctuaries. Our polymorphic social and cultural life is captured in a wide variety of fairs and festivals. How many of these very famous fairs are covered in tourism map? There are some fairs which perhaps people will come from very long distances only to visit, nothing more.

In fact, everything is so stereotyped. If it is a Sheraton hotel in Mauritius, it is the same Sheraton hotel in Delhi, it is the same Sheraton hotel in some other place. So, it is not the creature comforts that are important in the sense that they are all standardised. From the hotel you would not know which is the city you are visiting. The hotel is the same. But there are other things apart from what comforts you give, apart from what arrangements you make for the people to be taken from the airport to the hotel and back to the airport. All these are common. There is nothing new. What is new, is the distinctive feature of a country which the tourists are interested in seeing. Why should anyone come all the way from New York or Washington or Tokyo to India only to see that he is staying in the same hotel as they have there. I do not see any reason why he should come here. There is something which you have to offer, apart from the creature comfort, apart from the normal paraphernalia, what is available to him as a tourist.

So these festivals are one of the special attractions for any tourist, particularly the tourist within the country, for instance. Fairs have a particular social significance, an economic significance. A bazar, for instance, has an economic significance. Had there been no bazar, what would happen to those places? A hundred villages are covered in one bazar. On one bazar day, the kind of business you have, the kind of barter you have is something unimaginable. Now, these are the things which you have to catch, which the tourist has to be told how from ancient times in this country economic activity has been organised.

Our tradition of welcoming a visitor and sending him back as a friend as Ghulam Nabi Azadji has just said, is age-old. However, in the context of present day organised tourism, we have started it somewhat late. It is somewhat late in the sense that in respect of the modern type of tourism we are late. But I must add that India has never been essentially a tourist country. There is much more than tourism here. There are some countries whose main source of income is tourism. If you stop tourism in such a country, it will go broke. India will not. India has many other things to show, many other important matters are covered in its national life than tourism alone.

So, tourism has to be one of the activities of our people, our government, our organisers here. You have to give it a place that it deserves in this scheme of things as we see it in India, as we envisage it in India. So, when Mr Goyal wants tourism to be number one, it cannot be number one, it will be one among the top ones, yes, but not just number one. There is something more that has always to be number one in this country.

But the major advantage of tourism development is the generation of employment. As you are aware, it is the service industries today, which provides most of the employment in the world economy, no longer the manufacturing industries, and that

is why you have had so much of tussle in the Uruguay round of negotiations and in the GATT and all the rest of it. Services have been the very important bone of contention between the developing countries and the developed countries. And among the service industries, tourism provides more employment than any other. And even more importantly, tourism provides employment to women and to the educated unemployed. But the rural artisans and craftsmen are equally important as tourism keeps rural arts and crafts and the monuments alive, the old monuments some of which have been usefully converted into heritage hotels. In numbers, 7.8 million persons are employed directly and another 10 million indirectly.

Tourism, thus, is playing a key role in the socio-economic development of the nation. At the same time we do not wish to give up our intrinsic values. Our cultural heritage is dear to us and needs to be protected. All developmental activities have to be consistent with our social system and cultural traditions. We should also take special care to develop tourism in harmony with the environment which in itself is the most important tourist resource today.

Tourism development should also take into account the aspirations of the local communities which need to be involved in an organic and symbiotic way. This is another very important factor which all of us will have to take into account. You know for three and a half years, we have implemented what is called economic liberalisation programme in the light of which much has been done in tourism also. Tourism has been a beneficiary of all this opening up, of people coming and going. At the same time, some thought, some doubt, some apprehension which has been nagging me. You cannot be simply having an island of affluence in a sea of poverty. It is just not possible. So, if there is something coming up, whether it is a hotel or a complex of hotels or an industry for instance, people there, at least for the first five or ten years over which the

benefits will not flow to them, will say: "What have we got out of this?" This is a very natural way of looking at things. Something is happening there. In the first place, he does not know what is happening. He only sees something is coming up. So, we have to see that benefits also flow to the local people as quickly as possible. That is one thing which the Tourism Department also has to understand.

The potential of tourism in our country is vast and I am sure you will be able to take care of all these opportunities that are coming your way. I wish you well in your deliberations. But I do want this serious aspect of tourism where the people and scholars come to stay here to understand India and to study India. This has been there for thousands of years in this country. 'Travellers' as they used to be called, not tourists. They came as travellers, stayed here, studied here, took the image of this country, took the message of this country across seas to other lands. These are the serious people. You have to take care of them along with the normal tourists those come here.

Thrust on Social Sector Development

I AM GRATEFUL to the Honourable Members, who have participated in the debate and given very valuable suggestions. I do not propose to take up points along with the names of Members who have raised them. I have called out a few items, on which I would like to submit to the House my views.

We have come a long way since 1991 and the conditions of 1991. I do not want to remember them nor to remind the House of them. I will only say that in this long journey of the nation, we have come to a point where we can look to the future with certain amount of confidence and optimism and that is the main thrust of the President's Address to the Members of Parliament. I would endorse that spirit. I would endorse that optimism because what has been done during the last four years does justify that optimism. Facts, figures, situation as we have seen from time to time—we have lived through these four years—all this is witness to the fact that the optimism of the President, is fully justified.

There seems to be some forgetting of what we said last year and the year before last because when we talk this year, we seem to think that we are saying something for the first time. I would like to remind the House that ever since 1991, the spirit of the Government's actions has been the same. The purpose of actions of the Government and the policies of the Government has not changed. It has been on the same lines. And from 1991 to 1992, of course, we were only doing fire-fighting. From 1992 onwards, you will find a continuity in the programmes, in the policies, in the attitudes and in the thrust of whatever the Central Government has been doing. I started in 1991 to say that our actions have followed the basic principle of continuity with change. As our economic situation has improved, our commitment to the poor has manifested in higher outlays, and higher and higher outlays can be seen from the figures which are available to the House. Year after year, this has happened. This has been a common thread all through in the President's Addresses, Budgets and policy formulations. As a result, every year from 1992, onwards saw an increasing number of programmes being fielded. In 1992, I had clearly stated that we would not accept the proposition of unlimited capitalism and leave the poor out. Our position was stated very clearly. And in 1993, I had stated that the Budget of 1993-94 intended to give a major push to our policy of reducing poverty and increasing employment. This is what we

called 'human face' from day one. We are not calling it for the first time this year. Uplift of the poor is an article of faith with us. That is why in 1994, there was a note of optimism in the President's Address and this year that optimism and self-assurance has been vindicated.

Our thrust and commitment to the basic philosophy of the Congress has continued uninterrupted. While our achievements have been significant, there are many problems which still face the country. There is no gainsaying that. And to these problems, reference has been made by the Honourable Members and I would like to respond to as many of them as I can.

The first criticism which has been levelled not only today but year after year against the New Economic Policy is that the Policy is wrong and it is against the interests of the country. This criticism, I do not have to answer with any great stress and do not have to belabour the point too much because my task has been rendered easier by what has been happening during the last few years when successive governments not ruled by Congress have come back to the same line; and during the last two or three days, we can see in the newspapers, a line up of Chief Minister, 'just-elected Chief Ministers', coming for investment, from wherever it is available, making it absolutely clear that they have no hesitation in getting this investment because they know, as we know, that this investment is necessary. The only difference is that some people read the writing on the wall a little earlier; others read it a little later; but eventually all read it; and that is the great thing about this country; and I do not have to answer that point at all.

But there is one point this year, which has been stressed a little because of certain exigencies coming in the next one year, I presume; there has been a wedge being driven between the foreign investor and the local industrialist. Now, this is something which does not exist; this discrimination does not exist; but it is sought to be

portrayed like this. I would like to appeal to Honourable Members not to do this because this is not going to be in the interest of the country. We have not made any distinction, any discrimination against the local investor or local industrialist; and in fact, whatever local industry needed as protection, that has been given and that will continue to be given; but it cannot be the absolute protection, the protection that they have enjoyed for the last 30 or 40 years, to keep out everybody from outside. There has to be a change and that change has come. It is possible that some Members might say that the pace of the withdrawal of this protection, lowering of this protection has been a little quicker than necessary. That is a matter of perception; and I feel that according to Government, according to all calculations made by the Government, all assessments made by the Government, this withdrawal of protection, lowering of the protection has not been to the detriment of the local industry.

There has been some criticism that the policy of encouraging foreign investment has been at the cost of domestic industry. The decision to invite foreign direct investment was on account of our need to add to resource availability, induction of modern technology and upgradation of marketing and management skills available in the country. Accordingly when any foreign company has sought fiscal tax or tariff concessions, it has been advised that proposal-specific concessions are not part of our system. We do it across the board; there is a change in the policy; everybody falls in line with that policy. And there are no favourites played in this game. Such changes are made as part of the Budget and are applicable to all companies in a sector irrespective of whether they are Indian, joint ventures or foreign owned. We are consistently monitoring this aspect to ensure that Indian companies are not put to any disadvantage.

Some Honourable Members mentioned that the policy has encouraged the take over of Indian industry by multinationals. This is not true. Where the Indian companies have, for instance, for

reasons of infusion of capital or technology, sought to allow the foreign company to enhance their equity stake, the Government has accorded permission. However, we have made it incumbent upon Indian companies applying for such a change in equity structure to have the endorsement of their own Boards of Management or shareholders before Government accords such approvals. All these moves have been voluntary decisions of the company and not predatory ones or imposed by the Government.

I am somewhat surprised to hear that domestic industry has been adversely affected by the policies. Now, I am quoting some figures. The financial results of the corporate sector do not seem to indicate this. I understand that the provisional financial results for 135 major companies for the six months period ending in September 1994 have shown high level of profits. Except for five companies, all the rest have done well and the percentage growth of profits over the previous year for many companies has been, in figures, upto triple digits. As a sample, this does not reflect a domestic industry which has been hurt by the reform process.

I should also like to once again state that foreign investment has come into sectors to which we have attached importance. I would emphasise that 83 per cent of approvals accorded for foreign equity investment has been in the priority sectors with the major share being in power, oil refineries, metallurgical industries, chemicals, transportation, food processing, electronic equipment, etc. Even the balance of 17 per cent consists of the service sector (8 per cent), textiles (4 per cent), leather and rubber goods (0.8 per cent), soaps, cosmetics and vegetable oils (0.3 per cent), trading companies (0.3 per cent), fermentation industries (1 per cent) and miscellaneous industries (2 per cent), namely, jewellery, toys, locks, sports equipment, etc. Thus, there is clearly no distortion in the investment pattern in favour of an undesirable proliferation of consumer industries.

I would wish to draw the attention of the Members to two interesting features of the foreign investment proposals approved by

the Government. In the first three years of the policy, the number of projects approved for companies in which foreign equity exceeds 75 per cent were only 8.7 per cent of the total. This illustrates that investment is mainly coming with Indian partners and this would ensure that Indian companies are getting the benefit of upgraded technology, marketing and management inputs, inflow of the additional capital injection and increased employment. Similarly, if we take the total number of approvals accorded for projects with foreign equity exceeding Rs. 300 crore, these amount to only 13 out of 2526. On the other hand, those with foreign equity below Rs. 300 crore were 2006. It would be evident that the companies that are availing of the advantages of foreign investment are not big multinational giants but small and medium companies. Their partnership with emerging small and medium entrepreneurs should be encouraged rather than shunned. And this is the answer to the criticism that has been levelled in this connection. Figures are so clear, I feel that industry has adjusted well to the changed economic environment. In 1994-95, the growth in the manufacturing sector was 9.2 per cent. It is particularly noteworthy that our capital goods sector has shown resilience and its growth in the same period has been 24.7 per cent over the previous year. Surely, this does not reflect an industrial sector under pressure from foreign capital!

In addition to this, we are in touch with the local, domestic industrial sector almost all the time, continuously. I have had interaction. I am sure, other Ministers have had interaction. I am equally sure that Honourable Members of the Opposition, leaders of the Opposition, and Chief Ministers of the States other than Congress States are constantly in touch with them. We have not come across any such direct or indirect complaint that the Indian industry is suffering as a result of foreign investment coming. This has not come to my notice. But I would certainly like to know if there are any instances of this kind and if there is any such prevailing feeling that such a thing is happening, I would certainly like to know about it. I am telling you, I have not come across it.

About the GATT, we have been the contracting parties right from the beginning. We have been fighting the battle on behalf of the developing countries right through. I may also say, that in this battle, many of the other developing countries, even big developing countries, fell by the wayside. If anyone has continued the battle throughout, it is India and maybe one or two others. But many have had to yield. We have not yielded. But this is a multilateral forum.

Now, in the Non-aligned, in the G-77 or in any forum of the developing countries, what we have been saying consistently and persistently is that we want a multilateral system of trade. This has been there and we have been saying this for the last 25 or 30 years. And whenever one country seeks to dominate another through bilateral arrangements, we have been opposing it tooth and nail. Therefore, today when we have a multilateral forum finalised, working to say that all this is wrong, is something like putting the clock back. I am afraid, we cannot do that and we should not do that. It is not in the national interest to do that. Yes, when there is multilateral negotiations, there is always something like a 'give' and something like a 'take'.

We will have to see how far our interests are being served and I am absolutely certain that in all these long negotiations, very persistent negotiation, hard negotiations, our Government has done extremely well and, on the whole, we have come out with more gains and that is how we have become the champion of the developing countries. I do not have anything to be ashamed of it. I do not have anything to apologise for this.

I now come to some of the important matters that have been raised, like the social sector. Now, again in continuation with the human face that we have been advocating, I must submit to the House that in the very first Budget presented by this Government, we had clearly stated our commitment. As I just said, for rural development more was allocated. I think these figures have been

quoted by many other Members, I do not have to repeat them. What I would like to say is that every year we are yielding some new programmes for the alleviation of poverty and increase in the employment opportunities. Special programmes targeting poor and the weaker sections have been initiated in the last four years. These programmes include Revamped Public Distribution System, Employment Assurance Scheme, Mahila Samriddhi Yojana, Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana, intensive Jawahar Rozgar Yojana and Artisans Tool-kits Programme.

Under the Revamped Public Distribution System, as Honourable Members know, foodgrains are supplied at reduced price, that is reduced by about Rs. 50 per quintal less than the Central issue price. Now, on this point I would like to say—some Members have raised this point, it is very valid point—that the market price and the RPDS prices are more or less the same. Therefore, the off-take is coming down. I agree that this has been the scene. But why is it happening; we are not very clear about it as yet. We are making studies about this and my own feeling is that we may have to raise this differential of Rs. 50 further so that in the RPDS blocks, in the shops run there by the Government, it may be possible to sell those commodities at even cheaper prices than they are selling at the moment. But it is also possible that the diminution in the off-take has other reasons. It is possible that people go to the open market. They have more advantages in going to the open market and buying things rather than going to the fair price shops. Fair Price *shopwalas* may not be very regular and so on. There may be many reasons. We will have to go into those reasons. But I agree that this differential of fifty rupees is not necessarily the only reason. To the extent this reason is found to be valid, I would certainly like to go into it.

In fact, our study today is centred around the poorest families and their family budgets. We are going there and from there we are building up the policy structure of what is to be done on prices; what is to be done on food subsidy. Food subsidy, as Honourable

Members know, was Rs.4000 crore until last year. This year it has come to Rs. 5,200 crore. Now it is not just a matter of raising it. The point is : Why are we raising it? What is the advantage of raising it?

It is possible that we may be raising it; but it may be going only to the FCI and their officers and their expenditure etc., and may not reach the ultimate consumer. So, now we are chasing this point from the beginning to the end. That study, that exercise has been started. I would like to know what is the percentage which the producer gets and what is the percentage which is wasted between the producer and the ultimate consumer. We have come to the figure of 61.2 per cent which is what the producer gets. I agree that the other people are getting too much and a part of what the other people are getting should go to the consumer or to the producer. In principle I agree, but how is it to be done? We have a huge organisation like the FCI. If you do not have that organisation, in a country like India, it is not possible to have food security. Because we have had four or five good seasons, are we going to gamble with our security? This would be very wrong. But, at the same time, if you have this very huge organisation, as it is today, how are you going to bring down the difference between what the producer is getting and what the consumer is getting and in between whatever is being got by the other people. This is the question we are addressing. In the next few weeks, I am sure, we will be able to find some way of getting the producer a little more, or the consumer a little more of this concession so that whatever the middleman is getting is reduced to the minimum and the benefit goes either to the producer or to the consumer or both, if necessary.

A MEMBER: Free movement of foodgrains is not yet being permitted in all areas.

PRIME MINISTER: We have experimented with free movement. It has not been found useful all over the country. We see that if you allow free movement today, some States will stand to gain; many

States will stand to lose. It all depends on whether the State is a surplus State or a deficit State. This is well-known. We have tried it for the last 20-25 years one way or the other and we have seen that there has to be some way of tracking down what is happening in the movement of foodgrains, because the whole country being one, we have to see that disparities in prices also should not be too much.

The supply of improved tool-kits to rural artisans is a very quiet programme. But this has been going on in a very successful manner with great benefit to the artisans in our villages. So far 2.24 lakh artisans, that means almost half the villages or maybe more than one third of the villages, have been covered. The artisans are happy. They are not really any longer going to the cities because their tools are better. They are able to become more productive and that kind of urbanisation has been more or less reduced. The scheme has been extended to all the districts in the country this year.

I am not leaving anything to chance. I am not only supervising these things personally, I have kept this Ministry with me with some idea, some purpose. I am monitoring every one of these programmes, not 100 per cent but as a sample. Tomorrow I am going to Orissa. We have a programme of visiting villages, sitting with the District Collectors, sitting with the people who are beneficiaries, finding out what is happening, and calling the bank people also in the PMRY. We are involving everybody including myself. That is why I have kept this Ministry with me. I can say with a certain amount of personal knowledge—I am not saying that 100 per cent of everything that I am saying is happening—but I am at least able to see something is happening and I am able to satisfy myself that something is reaching the people which was not the case earlier because so many barriers were coming in the way.

Now, I will come to Tool-kits Programme. We have now started giving power tool-kits. Now, the artisans are saying that they have electricity in the village why should they use the old tool-kits

which do not use power. We are now changing. In Punjab, the other day, a number of people have told me that Punjab has electricity in every village, so why do you not change this? I have immediately made a commitment there publicly that wherever the tool-kit does not run on electricity, will be changed and a new power driven tool-kit, which, of course, costs about Rs. 1,000 or Rs. 2,000 more than the other one, will be given. We are prepared to do that. Wherever there is electricity—any village—we are prepared to change that.

To promote self-employment amongst the educated unemployed youth—one Honourable Member was just saying that all this money is being wasted—now I would like to assure him, if he wants, he can come with me, I will give him the list of those who have been benefited. I will give the list of what they are doing, what each one of these beneficiaries is doing. I have called for those lists, blockwise, districtwise, and villagewise. But, of course, in a country of this size 30,000 or two lakhs or three lakhs, do not make any impact, I agree. But, then, this is how you start. Maybe next year, we will go to five lakhs, after that we will go to ten lakhs. This is how every boy or girl who is a little educated, not very much educated, not highly educated, cannot go out of the village because he or she has no money, is being rehabilitated in this manner. We can show you all the details, give you all the details that are needed. If there are any bogus things, I am prepared to take action. In this, the bank people, I am told, in many cases, are not cooperating to the extent they should. Now, we are pulling up the bank people. We will see to it that they cooperate and even if they have any difficulty in their actual operation, then we will see that those difficulties are removed. So, the programme is so designed that it covers all sections of the society and all areas in the country.

Last year, as the Honourable Members know, an Urban Poverty Alleviation Programme had been started to cover 345 grass roots towns and would involve urban local bodies in accordance with the Seventy-fourth Constitution (Amendment) Act, in all aspects

of the scheme. A provision of Rs. 100 crore has been made and I am sure that it will take off this year in a big way. The Eleventh Schedule of the Seventy-third Constitution (Amendment) Act relates to the Panchayats in the rural areas and it provides for 29 functions which could be entrusted to them. Now, this has to be really done to the hilt. This has been done only partly at the moment because the Panchayats are in the process of coming into existence and when they come, all these will have to be implemented and most of the programmes that we have started would be made over to the Panchayats and it would be possible for the Panchayats to field them wherever they want.

This year, for the first time, those who are not covered by any of these programmes are being covered, like old people, survivors of families whose main bread-earners have died. Provision of sustenance of pre-natal and post-natal maternity care to poor women for the first two births has been made. There is creation of a new rural infrastructural development fund, expansion of the Mid-day Meals Scheme for school children, a Group Life Insurance Scheme of the LIC to be implemented by Panchayats in the rural areas and schemes for assistance by way of better credit for small-scale industries, khadi and village industries. I am very glad to say in this connection that under the Indira Awas Yojana, we have doubled the target. Ten lakhs of houses will be built this year.

I have also now decided that the families of ex-Servicemen who belong to those villages will also be included among the beneficiaries of the Indira Awas Yojana. Yesterday, I have also decided that this benefit will be extended to the para-military forces also.

Now, I will come to Jammu and Kashmir. This point has been raised by many Members. I would say what has been done in Jammu and Kashmir. Steps have been intensified to control militancy through sustained operations against terrorists in order to reduce the

fear of the gun. The security forces have scored a number of significant successes. Secondly, a number of detainees including the prominent secessionist leaders have been released. They have not only been released but they have been allowed to come to Delhi. They have been allowed to have free discussions with many political leaders. They have been allowed to visit some embassies etc., and this kind of general interaction is being encouraged.

The delimitation process is underway and the work of revision of electoral rolls is also expected to be completed shortly. In the context of our efforts to revive the political process it was important that the civil administration became functional. The restoration of the morale of the local administration coupled with disenchantment of the public with the militants has improved the overall ground situation. And I am saying this with a certain amount of responsibility. It is not just to tell the House what is not true. I am saying all this from not only reports but from very very reliable sources. I understand that there is a general improvement and people do want elections. They do want the electoral process to start. They are still afraid of the gun. That fear of the gun although much reduced still remains. This is the position.

There has been a noticeable step up in the pace of developmental activities since one year. Since one year we have been paying special attention to the developmental aspects in Jammu and Kashmir. A special plan assistance of Rs. 993 crore was given to Jammu and Kashmir in 1994-95. The schemes are being closely monitored. I have personally deputed two teams of Union Secretaries drawn from fifteen sensitive Ministries of the Government in critical areas of development. Under various Central sector programmes, an amount of Rs.200 crore was made available during 1994-95. There has been a marked enthusiasm among the people to come forward and avail of the benefits under programmes like the IRDP, Jawahar Rozgar Yojana and Employment Assurance Scheme.

Let me mention the comparative picture of achievements with 1993-94. Whereas in 1993-94 under JRY employment provided was 25.50 lakh mandays, in 1994-95 it was 65.93 lakh mandays. Under Indira Awas Yojana whereas in 1993-94, 390 houses were built, the figure for 1994-95 is 1697 houses. Rice supplied to the State increased from 36,200 tonnes to 44,000 tonnes and wheat allotment from 20,000 tonnes to 30,000 tonnes per month. Since the people of J & K have a preference for coarse rice, special teams were deployed to bring this rice from Punjab, Haryana and UP to J&K. So far 45,000 tonnes of rice has been moved to the Valley since October 1994.

A massive programme has also begun on top priority to restore schools, bridges, hospitals, electric installations damaged by the militants. The terrorists had damaged 450 educational institutions ranging from primary schools to colleges. These are all being repaired. This is the work that is being done.

I shall not give too many details. What I would like to submit to the House is, I have noted the opinions of all the Members on this matter. I am being very careful in submitting to the House the exact position as it is today, from all accounts, conditions are improving for the electoral process to be taken up. I am consulting with the leaders of the Opposition parties. Right now I am engaged in that. The Government has noted the desire for more autonomy voiced in several quarters. Soon after completing the round of consultations, I will take the Parliament into confidence with clear cut proposals. This is what I propose to do in this Session and in the next few days, I would like your indulgence to give me some time to take the House into confidence.

On Defence, a mention has been made in the House of the Agni and Prithvi programmes. As Honourable Members are aware, Agni is a technology demonstrator and the project has been to our satisfaction. I visited the Factory only three or four days back.

As far as Prithvi is concerned, the phase of user trials is over and subsequent activities are in hand. I would like to assure the House that there is no question of any outside pressures compelling us to delay or to compromise on our defence requirements. Whatever, we believe, needs to be done to secure the defence of the nation will be done.

About External Affairs, I would very briefly say that in the next two-three days we are going to have a Summit of the SAARC countries. I would not like to say anything about our relations separately with individual countries at this juncture when the SAARC Summit is to take place. All I would like to say is that we are trying our very best to improve relations from our side. There has not been any lapse. We would appreciate if this is properly responded to.

For the first time, we are going to have the SAPTA (South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement) being initiated this year. For ten years, we have not been able to make any headway in the SAARC meetings and SAARC Summits on the trade arrangement or trade relations between the countries. This should have been done long ago but for the reasons which are not so unknown, this has not happened. This year it is going to happen and I would like to submit to the House that this is a happy augury that within these seven countries some preferential trade treatments are also going to be given to one another and this will really result in what we have seen, in a combination like the ASEAN. In the last 15 to 20 years ASEAN has gone from strength to strength. In the same manner it is possible for SAARC also to perform in the coming years.

These are what I really wanted to place before the House. Sir, if there is anything more, I am prepared to respond.

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I AM VERY grateful to the Honourable Members who have participated in the debate and have given very good suggestions and criticisms also. After about four years of taking over, I would like to submit to the House that the manner in which we have traversed this distance, the difficulties that we encountered, the successes we achieved, the lack of success which also we experienced in certain areas, all this adds up to something which is hopeful for the future and that is the tone of optimism which is evident from the Address of the Honourable President. I would like to endorse that optimism. I am fully convinced that we have come a long way, but we have to go a longer way in future. This is a perpetual journey and on this we have to work together in the interest of the country and in the interest of the people. There has been some criticism to the effect that during the last four years we have forgotten the anti-poverty programmes which were necessary in the country and we have only been running after foreign investment which benefits only the rich few. This impression has been sought to be created for various purposes. And, maybe, the Government has not been able to rebut all this. To that extent, perhaps, I have to own this lapse. But I would like to remind the House that for the last four years, the thrust of all the programmes, the thrust of whatever new reform has been undertaken, has been only to lift the downtrodden in this country, those who have nowhere to go. The country had come to a grinding halt. The economic situation was, really, ghastly and if we had not taken the steps which we actually took, I do not know, I shudder to think, where the Government and the country would have been today.

So, I would like to correct this impression first, that the thrust of the programmes of the Government has been anything else other than the alleviation of poverty and increase in employment opportunities which is the most important way of alleviation of poverty in

this country. That is how the programmes have been cast from time to time and from year to year.

In the first year, 1991-92, we were only doing what may be called fire-fighting; we were trying to avert a disaster which was more or less at our door-step. We tried to steer clear of all the dangers that were going to be heaped on us as a nation. One year went in that and, at the end of that year, we were able to say that at least these dangers have been averted.

The country has been saved from the claws, from the jaws of complete bankruptcy; we have brought it back. Now we can mount programmes in the real sense which we wanted to mount because we had some funds available, some situation in the country which was coming under control and the situation was more congenial than 1991 to mount these programmes. I have been making it clear right from the beginning, from 1991 itself, about the philosophy which we have accepted—the philosophy of economic reforms with a human face. I am not talking about the human face for the first time this year or last year. It has been right from the beginning, from the very utterance from the very speech which I made in the Parliament, in my very first submission. I have been saying that we have to be always looking at the human face, thinking of the human face and being careful about orienting our programmes in the best interest of the country, which means the masses of the country and the poorest of the poor in the country.

We know that we have crores and crores of people who do not know what they are going to do for the next meal. To them, God comes as employment, as wage employment. Let me say that in India what we have mounted is the largest ever employment programme in the whole world. No other country has undertaken a programme of this magnitude. It may be very simple to us, it may seem to us to be such a common place but this programme is perhaps the largest, I have no doubt about that. In no other country has a programme of

this dimension ever been undertaken. Today, Rs. 30,000 crore have been allotted only for rural employment programmes in five years. This year it has been Rs. 7,700 crore, which is, I think, four times or even five times what we started within 1990 and what we inherited in 1991. Now, this is something which cannot be ignored. It cannot be belittled.

You may say there have been defects in it, this has not been properly implemented. We are all aware of the fact that in the implementation there may be flaws here and there, but do not belittle a programme of this kind where literally crores of people have been benefited. If they had not had this programme, they would actually be starving today. I was told in 1991 that certain starvation instances had come in Madhya Pradesh. I went to those areas myself, after the RPDS was announced, I talked to those people. Mr Patwa was the Chief Minister at that time. I called those people and I found what exactly the situation was. The situation was that rice was not reaching the people. The rice was leaving Punjab and Haryana; but the rice was just disappearing somewhere in the middle. So we started at that point where we had to chase a particular grain of rice from the field, from the market to the bellies of those who were to consume that. Where is it stopping? To that extent, we had to meticulously go into the matter. I can say that the RPDS is a programme which is totally self-contained, which leaves nothing to chance. It was brought to our notice, for instance, that the godowns were too few there. We undertook a huge programme of 8,000 or 9,000 godowns to be constructed in this country, all over those places covered by the RPDS. And this has been completed, as far as I know. At least the bulk of this has been completed.

So we have not left anything to chance. If you go into all these details, you will see that this is a matter of micro-planning to such an extent that we do not want anything to go wrong at the grass roots level. It is possible that even today such lapses might be happening, the fair price *shopwallahs*, for instance, may not be doing his duty

properly, he may not be attending, he may not be taking charge of the stocks when they come. But all this has been gone into and meticulously planned. In some States the State governments have given it to cooperatives, in some States they have given it to individuals. Now, perhaps the time has come when we could put the Panchayats to supervise this activity when they come into existence next month or before that. So the whole thing has been systematised; and it has taken three years. I cannot say that it was done over night. I am sure that it will take some more time to really perfect it to the extent where no one has to bother about grains reaching the people at the grass roots level everywhere in the country.

So, the continuity has been maintained and the change that we have brought about is already there for anyone to see. The change is a change which everyone has seen, everywhere in the world. The kind of licences, the kind of permits, the kind of difficulties, barriers; all these have been removed and the reforms have been seen as one of the most extensive kind of reforms, without, at the same time, upsetting the system, without, at the same time, upsetting the continuity. This is what has been done.

One criticism which has surfaced only this year in certain circles is that the reforms programme has done some injustice, has been unfair, to the Indian industry and it has been weighed in favour of foreign investment and foreign industries. Now, I would like to refute this with all the emphasis at my command. It is not so because the policy itself is not like that. The policy itself is such that it gives a level playing field to all the industrialists, from wherever they come. When any foreign company has sought fiscal concessions or tariff concessions, it has been advised that proposal-specific concessions are not part of our system.

Such changes are made as a part of the Budget and are applicable to all the companies in a sector, irrespective of whether they are Indian joint ventures or foreign companies. We are

consistently monitoring this aspect to ensure that Indian companies are not put to any disadvantage.

This, I think, has been floated, perhaps, for reasons other than the merit of the case; for electoral reasons, maybe. But I would like to refute this at the very beginning so that this thing is not really allowed to grow, allowed to spread and poison the minds of the people. The people come with investment to this country because the conditions are good here. They come because there is stability here. They come because we have one of the largest markets in the world. They come because of all these things. Now, if this question of discrimination were to creep in, I think, we will have some difficulties which we won't be able to surmount.

Some Members have complained about encouraging the take-over of Indian industries by multinationals. I think this again is a figment of somebody's imagination. It is not true. Where the Indian companies have, for reasons of infusion of capital or technology, sought to allow the foreign companies to enhance their equity stake, the Government has accorded permission. However, we have made it incumbent upon the Indian company seeking such a change in equity structure to have the endorsement of the shareholders before the Government accords permission to such a proposal. All these moves have been voluntary decisions of the companies and not any predatory moves, or anything imposed by the Government as a result of its policy.

I am somewhat surprised to hear that domestic industry has been adversely affected by the policies. I would like to clearly state that the provisional financial results for 135 major companies for the six-month period ending in September 1994 speak for themselves. They have shown a high level of profits. Except for five companies, all the rest have done well. And the percentage growth of profits over the previous year, for many companies, has been in figures up to triple digits. This is the kind of profits that they are making. As

a sample this does not reflect a domestic industry which has been hurt by the reform process.

I should also like to once again state that foreign investment has come into sectors—I am sure this point has been raised again and again and, perhaps, it will be raised, in spite of being answered again and again, because this is one of the talking points which comes in handy for Members and politicians—to which we have attached importance. The first time I visited Davos, I was asked this question. I told them in so many words—very clearly, without mincing any matter—that we would like investment to come into areas of our choice. And there is no going back on that, no compromise on that.

A MEMBER: That includes Coca Cola?

PRIME MINISTER: I will tell you what it includes; I am coming to that. I have anticipated your question. I would emphasise that 83 per cent of approvals accorded for foreign equity investment have been in the priority sectors, with the major share being in power, oil refineries, metallurgical industries, chemicals, transportation, food processing, electronic equipment, etc.

Even the balance 17 per cent consists of the service sector, 8 per cent, textiles, 4 per cent, leather and rubber goods, 0.8 per cent, soaps, cosmetics and vegetable oils, 0.3 per cent, trading companies, 0.3 per cent, fermentation industries, 1 per cent, miscellaneous industries like jewellery, toys, locks, sports equipment, etc., 2 per cent. Now, if this is the spread, what is the objection, where is the complaint that our industries have been gobbled up by others or that we are going in for consumerism or we are going in for things which are not necessary for us? I just cannot understand, from these figures, how these complaints arise.

I would wish to draw the attention of the Members to two interesting features of the foreign investment proposals approved by

the Government. In the first three years—this is very important—of the policy, the number of projects approved for companies in which foreign equity exceeds 75 per cent were, 8.7 per cent of the total. This illustrates that investment is mainly coming with Indian partners, that is, joint ventures, and this would ensure that Indian companies are getting the benefit of upgraded technology, marketing and management inputs, inflow of the additional capital injection and increased employment.

Similarly, if we take the total number of approvals accorded for projects with foreign equity exceeding Rs. 300 crore, these amount to only 13 out of a total of 2,526. This is the kind of gobbling that we are accused of. On the other hand, those with foreign equity below Rs. 300 crore were 2,006. It would be evident that the companies that are availing of the advantages of foreign investment, are not big multinational giants but small and medium companies. Their partnership with emerging small and medium entrepreneurs should be encouraged rather than shunned. We have taken certain decisions according to the wishes of the bulk of small-scale industries. I met their representatives more than once. They told us what we were supposed to do, what we should do, in order to see that the policy is moulded so that they do not run into difficulties. Exactly whatever they have told us, has been done. They have no complaint right now. This is the position.

I feel that industry has adjusted itself well to the changed economic environment. In 1994-95, the growth in the manufacturing sector was 9.2 per cent. It is particularly noteworthy that our capital goods sector has shown resilience and its growth in the same period has been 24.7 per cent over the previous year. Surely this has not reflected the industrial sector under pressure from foreign capital or from wrong policies.

I would like to take up some very important programmes of the Government, which, I am sure, many Members have referred to, but

I would like to say that during the last three years, every year has seen an addition of programmes meant for the poor. Every year the Government has brought in new programmes meant for giving employment to the unemployed people. And if we compare the figures of the last four years to 1990-91 figures, which we inherited, you will observe that there has been a significant increase in the allocation and expenditure on social sectors, especially rural and poverty alleviation areas.

Mr Afzal just now said something about education. Yes, in the next Plan, the allocation is going to be 6 per cent. But, even now we have not really wanted to make it stagnant and jump to 6 per cent, which is generally not possible. It has to be a curve, which is going up and up. Health and Family Welfare was allotted Rs. 1,040 crore in 1990-91. Now we have come to 1995-96 with an allocation of Rs. 2,251 crore. In 1990, the allocation to education, culture, youth affairs and sports was Rs. 951 crore. Today, it is Rs. 2,042 crore. So, there has been a steady increase in all these. I am not saying that this increase is enough. I am saying we are conscious of the needs of social programmes. For women and child development it rose from Rs. 313 crore in 1991 to Rs. 730 crore today. Welfare was allocated Rs. 365 crore and now it has become Rs. 940 crore. Special programmes targeting the poor and weaker sections were initiated in the last four years. These programmes include Revamped Public Distribution System, Employment Assurance Scheme, Mahila Samridhhi Yojana, Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana, intensive Jawahar Rozgar Yojana and Artisans' Tool-kits Programmes.

Now, the most important thing which I would like to bring to the notice of the House is this Artisans' Tool-kits Programme. This was taken up about two years back. We have already covered about half of the villages in the whole country. Every artisan was using archaic tools and becoming less and less productive and compelled to go to the towns for better employment, better tools, etc. They need not do so now because they have got better tools. Now

electricity has come to villages. The other day I was in Punjab. They knew about this programme because many of their artisans had benefited by it. They came to me and said, "Sir, we have got power in every village in Punjab. Can you not give us power-driven tools instead of tools which have to be hand-driven?" I said, "Yes, I will do it immediately. We will replace every tool-kit which has been given to an artisan with a power-driven tool-kit, although it may cost us about Rs. 2,000 more per kit." Now, this is how the artisan in the village in being helped to earn more, to better his lot.

Now, the Central issue price for PDS in the most backward blocks of the country is Rs. 50 less than the price in other places. This is the situation. This is the arrangement which we made 2½ or 3 years back, maybe in 1992 we had started it. Now the food subsidy which is involved in this is Rs. 4,000 crore until last year. This year it has jumped to Rs. 5,200 crore. Now the question before the Government is, what is the share of the producer in this and at what rate, at what price is the consumer able to get it? Are both prices fair? If I do not give a fair price to the producer what will happen in the country is evident enough. So, I have to start with a fair price to the producer which we have done during the last three years. Every year we have been increasing the price according to a formula which is given by the CACP. And even above that, we are giving a little more.

But at the consumer's end, what is happening is, much of this is being taken away by what you call 'middleman'. It is not 'middleman' but middle-organisations like the FCI, etc. They have also to be maintained. Out of this, the subsidy has to be given to these organisations with the result that in the price that is fully calculated, only 61.2 per cent is going to the producer and the rest is being consumed by these middle, intermediary-arrangements.

Now, the Government have been rather concerned about this 39 or 38 per cent going to the middle-arrangements. Can we bring

it down? How much can we bring it down? And how much of it can go to the consumer? This is the calculation we are doing. It is not easy to really cut because if you do not want to have the FCI or an organisation like that, you cannot have food security in this country. Food production has to be coupled with food security so that it is available everywhere. Today you cannot say that there is any nook and corner of India where foodgrains are not available. Price is the question. This is where the price differential comes.

I would come back to the House after this exercise is over and tell the House what is being done. You cannot really endlessly go on increasing food subsidy. It will only recoil on us. It will only add to our economic difficulties. So there has to be some relationship between the prices and this subsidy. Therefore, that is a formula which we have to work out. I will consult the House, come to the House and tell you what exactly is being done. In the whole gamut of this price structure of the country, each commodity has its own peculiarity. This year, I am told that the production of sugar in this country has beaten all previous records. Last year, we had a lot of difficulty with sugar; import and then irregularities in import and all kinds of things. The House had its time full debating sugar last year. This year, you will have the same time debating what you are going to do with the surplus stocks. There is a demand to export. We do not know what to do about it. If we do not, then the farmers will be at my throat. I will have to give them a proper price which I have done in the last two or three years with the result that this year, we have got a bumper harvest.

Now, these fluctuations are things which we have to understand. We do understand. Sometimes, we just try to ignore them. This year, I am having this kind of problem. The wheat crop is going to be a record crop. I have no place to keep it. And this is literally true. We are going to have problems of storage. And if you know how much is the cost of storage, sometimes, you come to the conclusion that it is better to give it away free rather than store it

under these circumstances. That is what we are trying to do in the case of the Mid-day Meal Programme. We are releasing 20-30 lakh tonnes for the Mid-day Meal Programme. But we know that the Mid-day Meal Programme has got a chequered history. In some areas, it has succeeded; in other areas, it has gone into the pockets of those who are running it. Therefore, we have to have a foolproof method. A Committee has been appointed by the Finance Minister. I hope it will be possible this time to make it a success story as it is in the State of Tamil Nadu or some other States like that. I know about these programmes. First I was in charge of education. We know the successes; we know the failures also. We have to have a foolproof method which is being worked out. I will come to the House when it is ready. This is the situation in regard to the price structure.

Some questions have been raised about pulses. This year, the difficulty is, we cannot even import pulses. We have the money to import. But the price of pulses abroad, in the countries from where we import, is higher than the price ruling in the country. What do we do? We can criticise the Government; we can raise slogans; we can do anything. We know that we are not self-sufficient in pulses. We are trying our best to become self-sufficient. We are slowly going up and up. But still we will need several years to become self-sufficient. We have put oil under OGL. Last year, we had a little trouble. This year, we have made it absolutely clear. You can import any amount of oil, palmolein etc. from Malaysia. This has been done by several States including Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Some difficulty was felt in the previous years. Now, any one, any State government, any organisation can do it. They can bring it and the prices will be stabilised. There is no doubt about that. These are the difficulties in the management of the price structure. We have at one end, the producers and at the other end, the consumers, and then there is difficulty in import from abroad, and wherever it is necessary, all these difficulties have to be taken into account before starting a

criticism and a hue and cry. It is a matter of satisfaction that these programmes for the poor have taken off in a big way.

The educated unemployed youth, not very highly educated, but just about Matric pass or Inter fail, those who could not go further in studies, but who could not really go as wage earners, are in very large numbers today. For them, the Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana was announced in 1993. I am glad to say that it has really done well.

This year, loans have been sanctioned to 1.77 lakh young entrepreneurs. The applicants were several times more. Maybe, three lakhs or four lakhs. I am personally supervising this programme, not because it is the Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana, but because Yojanas like this are likely to be resulting in a waste. We started it in 1975, for instance, when Indiraji was the Prime Minister. She started a programme like this. Within one year or two years, nobody knew what happened to that programme. The amount was about 25,000 rupees for every youth in those days. It was a lot of money. It worked for only one year and after that, we did not hear anything very good about that programme. Now, this should not happen again because this is a massive programme in which the banks are being involved. The banks are being involved in a big way and we do not want the banks to go broke just because of the election purpose or for some other purpose, we want some people to get money, whether they start anything or not. That kind of a bogus programme should not be there. It has to be a genuine programme and it has to be done in a very well-planned way. I am personally looking into it. I will come to the House with the results.

Then about the Mahila Samriddhi Yojana it is a matter of great satisfaction that 85 lakhs of rural women have opened their accounts in the post offices with a deposit of nearly 80 crores of rupees. This is something unimaginable, unbelievable because many of our women do not know that there is a post office and there is a savings

bank in the post office and they can have their separate accounts in the post offices. This is a silent revolution in a way and after the Panchayats come into place, if the lady members in the Panchayats take up this, I am sure, every woman in this country can have her own account. Having the account is not just having the money. Having the account is a part of the Empowerment Programme that we are undertaking and that is how it has to be understood.

This year, we have undertaken a new scheme—an Urban Poverty Alleviation Scheme. This Scheme is intended to cover 345 class-II towns with population between fifty thousand and one lakh and local bodies in accordance with the Seventy-fourth Constitution (Amendment) Act. A provision of Rs. 100 crore has been made for this year because it is just in the beginning stage, and, as I said, the Panchayats will have to take care of these programmes.

All these are identified groups which have been covered this year. I am sure, you will come across this point being raised during the Budget debate. Those who have not been covered under any of these programmes in the past, for the first time, the Central Government has covered those people, like old people. For old persons, old-age pensions and for poor households, survivor benefits on the death of the primary breadearner have been given. A provision of sustenance for pre-natal and post-natal maternity care to poor women for the first two births has been made. This is another very innovative programme that has been started. I am sure that this will give great benefits to the women.

There is creation of a new rural infrastructural development fund, expansion of the Mid-day Meals Scheme, a Group Life Insurance Scheme of the LIC to be implemented by the Panchayats. The Group Life Insurance Scheme again is an innovative scheme which the Panchayats would have to take up. If the Panchayats really do what they are expected to do or what we expected them to when we passed the Constitutional Amendments, then I think the

entire face of this country will change. I have heard from friends that the Panchayats, where elections have taken place, have given most unbelievable results. People about whom nobody could have dreamt that they would ever be elected, were elected. Those who were the big people in the village, who thought that they could be elected just like that by talking to people or spending some money, they have been floored, they have been very badly defeated. This is a real revolution that has taken place in many of the places where the Panchayats have come up. I am reminded of the 1937 first election in which Shri V. V. Giri defeated the Maharaja of Pithapuram. That kind of election I am seeing and I am able to see in the Panchayat elections now.

For the National Social Assistance Scheme, committees have already been set up for providing free of cost housing to the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and freed bonded labours, under the Indira Awas Yojana. An amount of Rs. 1,000 crore has been provided during the current year to construct ten lakh houses under the Indira Awas Yojana. Last year, we had four lakhs. This year, we are going to have ten lakhs. I have passed instructions that our ex-Servicemen and those who have worked in the para-military forces should also be included as beneficiaries. If they belong to that village they will have a share, they will have a right in the Indira Awas Yojana programme. This was something long overdue. It was a standing complaint from ex-Servicemen that their housing problem is not being solved. We have been able to solve it or at least we will be able to solve it through the Indira Awas Yojana in the coming years. These are some of the programmes in the social sector.

Now, I think I will have to deal with one or two matters in which all Members are interested, i.e. TADA. I will tersely put the position as it is now. While this law was enacted in 1985 to meet a difficult situation created by terrorist activities in some parts of the country, I have no hesitation in saying that some of its provisions were misused causing hardships to some people. I am clear in my mind

that the law as it is should not continue. I have requested the Home Minister to place all the options open to us before the leaders of the Opposition. After his consultations, the Government will immediately come up with the necessary legislation. The Home Minister has said the same thing. I am saying the same thing. But our languages are different.

A MEMBER : The expressions are different. But the inaction is the same.

PRIME MINISTER : It is not inaction, if you go into the history of this. We know all the options that are available to us. I may also add that the Supreme Court has upheld this law. I am not hiding behind the Supreme Court. I am not taking refuge under the Supreme Court having upheld this law. But, this is a fact to be noted. You go into the records of the House. It only means that a provision of law to deal with terrorism in this country was necessary and that is how it came. (Interruptions).

Now, coming to Jammu and Kashmir, I will very briefly give the latest position. Steps have been intensified to control militancy through sustained operations against terrorists in order to reduce the fear of the gun. The security forces have scored a number of significant successes. Secondly, a number of detainees including prominent secessionist leaders have been released. They have been allowed to come to Delhi. They have met some important leaders of the Opposition. They have visited several embassies of their choice. They have had a free exchange of views with those with whom they wanted to have that exchange. So, the situation has totally changed.

The delimitation process is now under way and the work of revision of electoral rolls is also expected to be completed shortly. Then in the context of our efforts to revive the political process, it was important that the civil administration became functional. In

this respect, I still don't feel fully satisfied because people coming from there, people reporting on this aspect of the situation, are still saying that the administration is not what it ought to be. There is some improvement, but much more improvement is needed. I own that. I concede that. The restoration of the morale of the local administration coupled with disenchantment of the public with the militants has improved the overall ground situation.

There has been a noticeable step up in the pace of developmental activities in the past one year. Now this is a new thing which we have started. It is not that no development was taking place. Much of it was sporadic. Not much of it was seen or felt by the people. So, it was a very unsatisfactory situation. Since one year we have taken up this programme in right earnest. A special Plan assistance of Rs.993 crore was given to J&K in 1994-95. Schemes are being closely monitored. I had personally deputed two teams of Union Secretaries of the Government of India, drawn from 15 sensitive Ministries of the Government in critical areas of development. Under various Central sector programmes Rs. 200 crore were made available during 1994-95.

There has been a marked enthusiasm amongst the people. Many of them have come forward and availed themselves of the benefits under the IRDP, Jawahar Rozgar Yojana and Employment Assurance Schemes. Let me mention the comparative picture of achievements in 1993-94 and 1994-95. Under the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana in 1993-94, the mandays created were 25.50 lakhs and in 1994-95, these are 65.39 lakhs. The difference is very clear. Under Indira Awas Yojana about 390 houses were built in 1993-94 and 1,697 houses in 1994-95. Given the situation, there can be some leakage in 1993-94 and also in 1994-95. I am not claiming that there is no leakage. But the point is that houses are being built. You can count them. Therefore, there is no question of denying these facts which are available and visible in the field.

The rice supplied to the State increased from 36, 200 tonnes to 44,000 tonnes and supply of wheat increased from 20,000 tonnes to

30,000 tonnes per month. Since the people there prefer coarse rice, special teams were deployed from Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh to J&K. So far, 45,000 tonnes of rice has been moved to the Valley since October, 1994. Under the RPDS, sites have been identified and work is in progress for construction of 21 godowns. I had just submitted that the first thing which was lacking in the RPDS area was sufficient number of godowns. Now that has been taken care of in J&K.

A massive programme has also begun on top priority to restore schools, bridges, hospitals and electric installations damaged by the militants. The terrorists had damaged 450 educational institutions ranging from primary schools to colleges. These are being repaired. I am getting weekly reports on what is being done on this front. Electricity is very important in a strife-torn terrorist-affected area like J&K. During 1994-95, Rs.395.87 crore was spent on the Uri Hydro Electric Project and 70 per cent of the work has been completed. With the induction of a new civil construction agency, work on the Dul Hasti Project is also going to commence in July and will provide employment to a large number of people. In this matter we had to really work for months and months together and up to my level I had to take part in the discussions.

These two projects will improve the power supply position in the State considerably. In Ladakh, two diesel generating systems were commissioned at Choglamsar and Bazgo. About 90 per cent of the work involved in the erection of the 220 KV line from Jammu and Srinagar has been completed and the transmission will be charged from July this year.

The second phase of the gas turbine was commissioned at Pampore which generates an additional 100 MWs. The College of Engineering and Technology set up at Jammu was made functional. Degree colleges were opened at Kargil and Leh. All the districts of the State are covered by DIETs, (District Institutes of Education and

Training). Phase-I of Operation Blackboard was implemented in the State. All the pending examinations—this is very important—of the Kashmir University and the secondary schools of the Valley have been held and results declared. I am afraid we cannot say this of many other schemes.

I have outlined in brief some of the steps we have taken recently in order to indicate the basis of my confidence that it will be possible to revive the political process in the near future. Of course, the electoral process has to be taken care of by the Election Commission. But we are creating the conditions, we are succeeding in creating conditions which will satisfy him that he can undertake the holding of elections. In this regard, if any further developments take place, I will take the House into confidence.

So, from all accounts, conditions are improving for the electoral process to be taken up. I am consulting the leaders of the Opposition parties. I am discussing with them because there are so many risks in this. But if you don't take the risk, that risk of not taking the risk is much greater. Therefore, it is not easy to do. I have to have a consensus on this.

The Government has noted the desire for more autonomy voiced in several quarters and I am being very careful in putting this because I don't want to say anything more than this. I am having consultations and a time will come when we will have to say something more in clear-cut terms. But that time has not yet come. I will come back to the House with that clear-cut proposition. Soon after completing the round of consultations, I will take the Parliament into confidence with clear-cut proposals subject to which we will go in for elections. This is how the situation stands right now.

On Defence, I am sure some Members might have referred to the progress in our missile programme—Agni and Prithvi. I would like to inform the House that as the Honourable Members are aware,

Agni is a technology demonstrator and the project has been to our satisfaction. I visited the Agni Factory only three days ago.

As for the Prithvi programme, the phase of user trials is over and the subsequent activities are in hand. I would like to assure the House that there is no question of any outside pressures compelling us to delay or compromise on our defence requirements. Whatever we believe needs to be done to secure the defence of the nation, will be done.

Madam, I have covered many of the areas.

Reviving Political Process in Kashmir

I AM EXTREMELY grateful to the Honourable Members who have participated in the debate. They have criticised the Government. They have also offered suggestions, in some cases criticism mixed with suggestions and I would like to assure them that the Government will take into account each and every point raised by the Honourable Members.

All the facts that are available with the Government have been brought before the House. I would not like to repeat them. The options as were available to the authorities at the spot have also come before the House. They have been commented upon. The same strategy which worked in one place in one case did not work in another case.

That is why, I pointed out to the Honourable leaders of the Opposition when I met them that: "You cannot condemn the strategy; you can only say, in this case it has not worked." Three-four strategies have been followed in the past by the Government—first in the Golden Temple, second in the Hazaratbal and the third which was repeated in Charar-e-Sharief. There were successes; there were failures. I also told very humbly to the leaders of the Opposition that 'in a matter like this you cannot expect to succeed every time. There will be partial successes, total successes but finally we have to go with the full faith that the success will be ours, victory will be ours.' That is the faith with which the Government is going ahead. I cannot guarantee that in the future also we will come out with unqualified success in every incident and every case.

This is a long-drawn struggle and in this we will get some casualties. At the same time, we will make many more targets of our attack and about four-five thousand terrorists have been killed during the last three-four years. Let us not forget that, we have not been just pussyfooting here and there, we are not being chicken-hearted. But when it is a question of saving the lives of civilians, even in a military operation, I am not ashamed to say, I do not regret saying that the lives of the people are sacrosanct and as far as possible, the military operation also should take into account this and try to avoid it as far as possible.

Now, the town is just like a kind of beehive. It abuts more or less on the Shrine. I understand that if people go in as ordinary pilgrims, concealing their weapons and suddenly say that they are in possession and we find that they are in possession and in this case, I am quite convinced in my mind that there is only one action left and that action is one of not attempting to storm the place, storm the Shrine but to wear them out as far as possible. There is always this risk. It has been said many times. Many speakers have said it. We cannot do anything in these operations without taking one risk or the other. What I would like to very respectfully submit to the House is,

the greater risk has been avoided, a smaller risk has been taken, but the smaller risk has resulted in a tragedy, in a disaster and we feel that the whole country, the Government the Parliament, everyone is concerned, is feeling the anguish of this disaster.

I have no doubt that whatever has been said in this Parliament today, every word is full of anguish and anger also, but anger against those who have perpetrated this. I have no doubt in my mind that despite whatever disinformation is being created, it is these terrorists from Pakistan, these militants from Pakistan—trained, armed, funded and sent by Pakistan—are responsible for this tragedy. I have no doubt at all—no doubt on any account on this and this disinformation, I would like to submit, is atrocious. It cannot be done without someone again fanning this from behind and we know who is fanning it. So, let us not fall in this trap.

On the operational side, I was asked to explain as to who took the decision on the 7th of March to send the Army and BSF to occupy certain high features around the town.

May I submit that in occasional matters, no instructions are sent from Delhi, neither now nor any other time in any other operation? The decisions are taken by the authorities there in which the BSF, the other forces, the Army, the Government Administration, all of them are involved. They have a mechanism there and that was the way the decision was taken. There was no question of sending any operations, instructions from here. That is never done. That has not been done. That will not be done. That I can assure the House.

These are the facts and this is the result. So much has been said about elections. Why is it that I did not talk of elections last year? Why is it that I did not talk of elections year before last? We only talked about terrorism. We only talked about casualties. We only talked about what the Government was doing or not doing about

terrorism. We all agreed that this terrorism is being sent from abroad, from across the border. We were fully convinced that this is so. There has been evidence which has been shown internationally and there is hardly any doubt in anybody's mind today that this is being done by Pakistan.

I do not see any point in going back on that or questioning that. Why is it that only this year we have started the effort to create an atmosphere of a political process? Two years back also, I had a meeting with the leaders of the Opposition. Every one of them said, 'no, nothing doing. We will have to control terrorism. That is the first thing to do. You think of other things later.' I was convinced. That was true. Therefore, we concentrated on controlling terrorism and this year when it was found that the control in the aspect of terrorism had advanced a little—advanced even considerably, let me say—and the atmosphere has changed, we just started thinking about the political process. Today in the whole of Jammu and Kashmir, the talk is about elections. The talk is about the political process. It is occupying everybody's mind. Does this not really denote a total change from the previous years? Somebody says, 'no, election cannot be held.' Another party says, 'no, it should be held.' Another party says, 'it can be held only if you give us a package. What do we take to the people? So, please give us a package.'

All these questions are engaging the attention of the Government. I have been overtaken by events. I agree. I confess. But I was having talks with the leaders of the Opposition on the desirability or otherwise of having elections. It is not that elections or dates of elections have been announced. That has to be done by the Election Commission. The Election Commission has made it clear that unless they are satisfied that free and fair elections can be held in Jammu and Kashmir and conditions there are under control to their satisfaction, they will not have it. It is up to them, upto the Election Commission. What we are trying to do is to create the atmosphere. That atmosphere has been created and I want to submit to the House

that while creating that atmosphere, we were all the time aware of two facts. One is that at the last moment it may be that something will happen. The second is that it may be that there is a neighbour of ours who abhors these elections who is so frightened of these election that he will go to any extent to frustrate the elections, to thwart the efforts of the Government to hold elections.

These two things were known and today, as it is, this incident, I would like to submit once again with all the sincerity at my command, should not become the reason for reversing our decisions on the political process.

I would like to very respectfully submit to the House that yes, leaders have their own views. They have been expressing those views. I am taking those views into consideration. And I told this House the other day, that after talking to all the leaders, I would come back to the House and make a statement in regard to the political process. We all have been overtaken by events. So, the time has not come, the day has not come. But I will still do it. I will continue my efforts and I will come back to the House with whatever strategy the Government thinks is proper.

We are amenable to advice. We are prepared to sit with you. But merely because a particular strategy in one case has not worked, we cannot really say that it will never work. I am quite clear in my mind, that from time to time, from incident to incident, from case to case, we have been examining the pros and cons of everything. What happens is that the poll is so low that the people will start reading meanings into it.

I would like to inform the House that this, the possibility of the low poll has been discussed not only within the Government but with other Governments, internationally also. What are the implications of a low poll and what are the implications of a no poll. You do not have wonderful options before you. The options are low poll and no

poll. Now, we are calculating it. I am amenable to guidance, to advice from Honourable Members, shall we have no poll at all? There are examples in the world where no polls have taken place for twenty years under similar conditions.

But we think that President's Rule, according to our experience, becomes rather counter-productive after some time. It may be one year; it may be two years. Now, it is five years. You will stay where you are. In fact, things go back, slide back. I do not want that. Everyone agrees in principle that there should be the political process. It is nobody's case that there should be no political process there. It is a question of whether at a particular time you think that the conditions are ripe to start it, to take the plunge and as Shri George Fernandes has said political activity should precede political process.

Elections will come last. We are trying to encourage the process by releasing the leaders who were incarcerated for a number of years, by allowing them to come here, talk to everybody. I was talking to the leaders to whom they have talked. I am getting the feedback from the leaders in regard to what they are saying. I have not yet started talking to them because once I start, then, there is nothing else. You come up against a plank wall.

So many leaders have been helping me. I am grateful to them. They are giving me the feedback. That feedback is available with me. The process is going on. This is how things are being done step by step. Now, we have a setback. I have said it openly. I have said it to the Press that this is a setback. But we feel that in spite of the setback, the atmosphere created will not be vitiated for ever. Let us see to what extent it has been vitiated. We are taking all the reports into account.

In fact, I am not in a position to divulge the operational details to the House. I am not in possession of the details because the

operation is still continuing to the sense that only as of this morning, the cross-firing has stopped and the Army is screening up the place. I am told that the latest report is that the place will be made over to the civil authorities some time tomorrow. We are going to have the opportunity of an all-Party Delegation of Members of Parliament going to Jammu and Kashmir. I have agreed to that. They wanted it and I am very happy that we are going there. When we go there, that will be the time when operational details etc. can be presented.

There can be a presentation by the authorities of what happened at what hour, at what minute and where and at what spot. I am quite sure that they will be able to give you all the facts in regard to the operation, then we can come to our conclusion. What I am saying about the responsibility is, yes, nobody is disowning responsibility. I am not. The point is that in a matter like this, we will have partial successes, total successes and failures as well. We have to be ready with all these. We will be killed, they will be killed and ultimately with the hope, with the full faith that the triumph is going to be ours because our cause is the right cause.

Jammu and Kashmir is an inalienable part of India. I do not know what else one can say about the Jammu and Kashmir Policy apart from what we have all resolved here in that Resolution unanimously. That is the Jammu and Kashmir Policy of the Government. From time to time, we are acting on that Policy. Whether we continue with one part of the Policy or the other part of the Policy, is a matter of strategy. Given the circumstances, we have to take the decision. And this is what we have been doing. There is no need of making this a party issue. It has never been a party issue. It will not be a party issue. I would like to say that I would continue to make it an issue of national consensus. I will do nothing to change that position. I would like to continue with that position. So, this is what I have to say.

Now for the rest, I cannot deny that Charar-e-Sharief has been burnt down. I cannot deny that a tragedy has occurred. I cannot deny

that this should not have happened. But I cannot also deny that all options available were considered and the option of not interfering in the Shrine, not storming the Shrine was taken after due consideration. If we had really interfered, if they had really interfered or stormed, the Shrine would have gone and the casualties, the civilian casualties would have been abounding. They thought in their wisdom, in their operational meetings and consultations that this should be avoided. Now I have no way of saying that this was wrong. We do not operate that way, we cannot function that way. So this is the position.

Sir, whatever I have to say, I have said, I am ready to take the House into confidence, the Members of the parties into confidence on every detail, or every decision to be taken on Jammu and Kashmir as I consider it a matter of national consensus.

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I AM THANKFUL to the Honourable Members who have participated in the discussion and have given very good suggestions.

This is a great tragedy. We are all under great stress and agony that this should have happened. I would like to say, very briefly, that this is part of the activities being conducted by our neighbour, part of the low-cost proxy war that they have launched against us. It has not been launched today. It has been going on for a pretty long time. This is the time for us to understand clearly what is being done by whom and what should be our outlook in a matter like this.

It has been our endeavour that while we tackle these questions as they come, we should not lose sight of the fact that in any encounter like this, in any engagement like this, the possibility of a

large number of casualties on the civil side should never be ruled out or ignored. That has been at the back of our mind in all these operations and I would like to submit that this has been observed as far as it was humanly possible.

Now I am putting it very briefly. Some reports came earlier. What could we do? The point is that it is a town extremely congested and the Shrine is a part of the town and it is just not possible for you to go and screen every person who is there, every person who is going into the Shrine and coming out of the Shrine. Honourable Members may remember that we had the same kind of problem in the Golden Temple about ten or eleven years ago. Even the presence of a police constable outside was resented. It will be resented, not only here but also in any shrine. If you want to post a policeman there, it would mean something else. It is not just the man standing there. It would mean he is taking some action, becoming active on some score or the other. How and why, I cannot say. It is possible that something might happen in which the policeman standing there cannot just simply stand but has to do something else. Something may happen to a pilgrim. He may be beaten; he may be caught; he may be questioned; he may be frisked. In any case, a policeman standing there without frisking arrangement or power to frisk would be meaningless. So, where do we stop? Where do we end this? What is the alternative? I don't think it is possible to frisk and screen everyone of the millions and millions of pilgrims visiting the shrines, all kinds of shrines, all religious shrines in the country.

If this is the logic of the situation, it is very clear that once or twice, here or there, you may have to take the risk of someone going as a pilgrim into a shrine, taking possession of it and our having to deal with that situation.

I think it is that simple. There is really nothing very complicated about it. I would say that in a crowded situation there are all kinds of possibilities. We do not expect anyone to defile a temple or

a place of worship by making use of it in the wong way. But many places can be used wrongly. When a place of worship is used wrongly—not only wrongly but with criminal intent—and it becomes a ground of hostage in the hands of the terrorists and if it is a wooden structure which can be burnt any moment, any second, if you storm, you will lose, both ways. You will lose the temple, you wil lose the shrine because by the time you storm, the shrine would be gone. They would set fire to it. And in order to reach the temple, reach the shrine, you will have to shoot your way and in that hundreds of people, innocent people, might have to be shot or will be shot. So what do we do? Do we save the people? Do we save the shrine? Ideally, I would like to save both. It happened in the case of Hazaratbal. It did not happen that way in the case of the Charar-e-Sharief. This is how it can be summed up.

Now, I am sure, something was said about the electoral process or the democratic process. I would like to be very clear on this. For the last one year, there has been a change in the atmosphere in Jammu and Kashmir.

I welcome all this. There is an atmosphere of democratic process in Jammu and Kashmir which has supplanted considerably the air of violence, the air of counter-violence. And this is the significant fact. We have not ordered elections. Dates have not been fixed for elections. When there is talk of elections, when there is talk of the democratic process, what else do we talk? We have welcomed the talk, the change in the atmosphere and we have taken certain actions.

Leaders, who were not in favour of the present set-up continuing, had different views. There is a party which wants that Kashmir should go to Pakistan. There are parties which want that Kashmir should be independent. And in the same manner there are different views held by different parties. They were in jail. They were not allowed, perhaps, to visit some places because they were in jail. The

first thing we did was to release them. They were allowed to visit the whole of the country. They were allowed to talk to anyone. They have been talking to our leaders here. I am glad to say that the leaders of the Opposition parties have been good enough to share the gist of their conversation with me. I am taking into account all these conversations. I am taking into account the possibilities thrown up or not thrown up by these conversations. I am glad that I am able to see some light at the end of the tunnel. What they meant by *Azadi* may not mean total independence. It may mean something less. It may be something which we may not reject, hopefully. But I am not sure of anything at the moment. That is why the dialogue is on.

I promise the Parliament that after I have had another round of discussions with those leaders who have had discussions with the leaders of J&K, I shall come back to the House with a more definite plan of action or approach or whatever you might call it. This has been my approach to the whole question. You can certainly discuss whether elections are possible or not. But there is a constraint, in the sense that the 18th of July is the cut-off date, after which you cannot continue with the President's Rule there unless the Parliament legislates to that effect. That constraint can be converted into an advantage. It can be converted into an opportunity. But if you cannot do it, the Parliament is always ready, I am sure, to extend the President's Rule. But should I give up now? Should I give up even before I have started? Should I start with the assumption that elections are not going to be possible? We have been saying that the democratic process has to start. There are many reasons for it. I am not obeying anybody else by saying this. I am only saying that elections should take place. I am only saying that the democratic process should be started because after a few years, in fact, after one or two years, the advantage of having the President's Rule, the effect of all that happened during the President's Rule, the power, the concentration of power and the absence of popular representatives, according to our Constitution, starts taking the path of diminishing returns.

Now, we have completed five years in Kashmir. We have seen both the rules. We have gone through the President's Rule in many other States. We have found, and I am sure the House will agree with me, that, after some time, the President's Rule becomes something which can be dispensed with. We should make haste as far as possible without, of course, affecting the situation there adversely. We should have a popular Government. That is what we are trying to do. The people have come out. There is a dialogue going on. The talk of democratic process is very much in the air. When all this is happening, I would plead with the House to let this go on. Let us go on with this dialogue. Let us know where we stand. I feel that sometimes if the people want, even miracles can happen. Miracles have happened in this country. Political parties have lost. Parties have gone out of power and parties have suddenly come into power. Parties have been swept off their feet. What is it that people cannot do, if they really want to do it? I have faith in the good sense of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. It is true that today it may be impossible.

It is the fear of the gun. What is it we have been saying? We have been saying only one thing: People are fed up with the gun. But there is a fear of the gun. Today, I do not expect anyone to stand up in the streets of Srinagar or in other places and say that so and so had done it and if in that kind of fear they say that it is the Government's failure to save our shrine, I would not join issue with them. I understand their position. But facts are facts. It is the terrorists, trained, funded, inspired and sent by Pakistan who have done this. It is known to every one. In this country, there may be Doubting Thomasses. I don't know why. But no one doubts it. Today, every country in the world knows what Pakistan's role is in Jammu and Kashmir. I am glad to say that I don't have to repeat it now. I had to say this as the Head of the Government three years ago and I don't have to repeat it now.

So, it is well-known, whatever Pakistan might say. There may be this conference or that conference. All the antics notwithstanding-

ing, people all over the world, Governments all over the world, know what is happening in Jammu and Kashmir. We have shown our bonafides. We have shown our utmost restraint. We have shown our utmost respect for human rights. We were being assailed on human rights three years ago. I am sure that the attack has been meted to such an extent that sometimes I am on the offensive and say 'human rights for whom?' And then there is no answer. There are no human rights for an ordinary citizen who is killed in the dead of the night, for those people who were dragged out of the buses in Punjab and Kashmir and shot in a row all round. So, human rights are for all human beings. Human rights were not necessarily reserved for terrorists. This has been accepted. This has been appreciated. In fact, I was quite plain about it. I am glad that the human rights activists today are a little more balanced about this

So, these are the situations and we would like the democratic process to come in. Let us sit and find out. In fact, I have more or less completed one round of discussions with the leaders of the Opposition parties. I would like to have another round and at the end of it, if things go well, there can be a dialogue directly with those who hold certain views on what Jammu and Kashmir should get or what the dispensation should be so long as it is within the Indian Constitution. Those who are against the Constitution, those who want to go out of India, there is no meeting ground between them and us. But within the Constitution, flexible as it is, imaginative as it is, varied as it is, if it is possible to find a particular dispensation for a particular area, I think that is the victory of the Constitution.

I would like to uphold that as a victory of the Indian Constitution and, therefore, of the concept of Indian unity, when we talk of 'unity in diversity', this is what it is. It is not a slogan. If you don't have diversity and you want uniformity all over the country, this is not possible and we all know it. Therefore, here is a test of our unity in diversity. Here is a test of the Constitution, the imaginative nature of our Constitution, the flexible nature of our Constitution, which

allows so many varieties of coexistence with unity. So, this is the challenge before us, if I may suggest.

One of the leaders actually told me—and I thank him for having said, “The time has not yet come for you to have direct talks. Let us talk first. We will come back to you.” I am grateful to that leader. If I start talking and if he disagrees, what else is there? Are we going back to the bush? Are we going back to insurgency? There must be some buffer. The leaders who have offered to become a buffer are doing a very good job. I don't want to name them. Many of them are from different parties. I am very grateful to them for the very great job that they are doing. When the time comes, I will come out openly with all the facts. Give me a little time. I have been overtaken by this incident. It is a setback. It is a setback to the process that we have set in motion. But this setback cannot browbeat us to the extent of giving up the process. I will not. In fact, my determination is all the more today than what it was on the 8th of May. And, that should be the spirit in which we go ahead. If we are browbeaten, if we loose heart just because someone has sent a few fellows from across the border to create trouble here, if this kind of a trouble can deter us from our determination, we don't deserve to exist.

This nation has to exist through all these trials and tribulations. We have to make the nation strong enough, determined enough, to exist through all this. We have existed and we will continue to exist. I have no doubt that we will get over all these troubles. During the last 45 or 47 years, no trouble in India has continued for ever. Take Nagaland, take Mizoram or take any part of the country. There is hardly any part which has not had a trouble—a trouble of some kind or the other; troubles of many kinds at the same time, if you wish. But we have got out of it. The country has got out of it. The unity of India and the genius of the people of India have found ways of getting out of it. This is the faith with which we are going.

Towards a Clear Defence Policy

THIS DEBATE SEEMS to have been completed in several instalments. It is possible that something of what was said on the first day has been forgotten by today. But I have got all the notes and I find, that most of the factual details, whatever was asked for, have been given by my colleague, the Minister of State, and if there is anything which is still to be furnished to the Honourable Members, we will certainly do so.

I would only confine myself to a few matters impinging on the Defence Policy of the Government and I would like to take the House into confidence and explain these things to the best possible extent.

The first criticism has been a rather extraordinary kind of criticism to say that we have no National Defence Policy. I would like to submit very respectfully that this is not true.

We do not have a document called India's National Defence Policy. But we have got several guidelines which are strictly followed and observed and those can be summed up as follows :

1) Defence of national territory over land, sea and air encompassing among others the inviolability of our land borders, island territories, offshore assets and our maritime trade routes.

2) To secure an internal environment whereby our nation-state is insured against any threats to its unity or progress on the basis of religion, language, ethnicity or socio-economic dissonance.

3) to be able to exercise a degree of influence over the nations in our immediate neighbourhood to promote harmonious relationships in tune with our national interests.

4) To be able to effectively contribute towards regional and international stability and to possess an effective out-of-the-country contingency capability to prevent destabilisation of the small nations in our immediate neighbourhood that could have adverse security implications for us.

A mention was made about the recommendations of the Estimates Committee suggesting that the Government should articulate a clear and comprehensive Defence Policy. It may be noted that the Ministry, in its Action Taken Notes on the 19th Report of the Estimates Committee, explained the position very clearly to the Committee. The reply was accepted by the Committee and was treated as acceptance of their recommendations, as mentioned in their 41st Report. This Policy is not merely rigid in the sense that it has been written down, but these are the guidelines, these are the objectives, these are the matters which are always kept in view while conducting our Defence Policy. I think no more explanation or elaboration is needed than this. And particularly in the context of our own Estimates Committee having accepted it, I do not think that any further question can arise.

A question was raised about the National Security Council (NSC). It is true that we had a National Security Council, first established in 1990 and it had only one meeting. After that nothing happened. When this Government came into office, the question was raised both in the House and outside. In the Government, a lot of thinking has gone into it meanwhile. I had occasion to promise a National Security Council or some body which takes into account the questions of national security and we have examined the entire gamut of possibilities and options available to us.

I have referred to this important subject earlier and indicated that we were reviewing the orders issued on the subject by the

Government in 1990. It is not because a new Government has come that we wanted to change everything. It was because of the experience of the National Security Council as it existed from 1990 was found a little unworkable. A Strategic Policy Group headed by the Cabinet Secretary and including the Service Chiefs, Secretaries of Ministries concerned like Defence, Home, External Affairs and Finance and Heads of agencies was also set up to consider the strategic policy papers. Now, according to the decision at that time the National Security Council was to comprise of the Prime Minister as Chairman and Ministers in-charge of Defence, Home, Finance and External Affairs as members as well as some others including Chief Ministers as and when needed. Essentially, it was, what is known as, the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs, plus one or two added.

It was a kind of mechanical addition. It was not a functional addition. A fairly large advisory board comprising experts, academics, scientists, journalists, former Government officers some Chief Ministers and MPs was also constituted to enable interaction with non-official resource persons. It is this big body which was found to be a little unwieldy and its deliberations tended to become a little diffused in the sense that we could not in matters of national security come to a particular decision or particular conclusion after deliberations in this big body. The board was to assist the NSC in providing a broad range of informed views and options.

My opinion is—after examining the working and whatever happened in that meeting—that this objective cannot be achieved by a body of that size and composition. We have undertaken a thorough review of the above mechanism and come to the conclusion that a number of changes would be required. For one thing, the National Security Council as set up in 1990, as I have just submitted, is not much different from the CCPA. Secondly, the advisory board as proposed in 1990 appears to be somewhat unwieldy. Discussions in such a large body, would tend to lose focus and make the whole

exercise blurred and confusing. Consultations with experts outside the Government including Members of Parliament and experts in academic and other institutions are important and advantageous. But such consultation is best done in small well-knit groups with persons having specialised knowledge or expertise of that specific subject concerning national security.

National security is a very wide subject. It consists of so many items and it is better to concentrate on each item and while discussing that item, it is better to have experts in that particular item, in that area, rather than having expert in a big body and losing focus. This is the idea and this is the conclusion we have come to. The same set of persons to be consulted always in a large advisory board would not serve much purpose. We therefore, feel that instead of having one large advisory board, it would be more appropriate to provide for meaningful interaction with selected experts in each specific field under study or discussion. Such experts can be associated at the stage of preparation of strategic policy papers as well as during discussion of such papers at a higher level.

Our review of the system prevailing in other countries shows that different structures exist for dealing with national security issues depending upon the system of government prevailing in that country. Generally, the National Security Council set-up is found in countries where the Presidential form of government has been adopted. The most notable example being that of the United States. We find that it is difficult to have such a system transplanted in India because here the business of the Central Government has to be ultimately transacted in the Cabinet or Cabinet Committee with Ministers in-charge being responsible for their subjects to Parliament.

In the United Kingdom, for instance, no single National Security Council has been set up and the work pertaining to national security matters is considered in different Cabinet committees for

example, the Committee on Defence and Overseas Policy, the Committee on Intelligence Services, etc. In our case, a system more akin to that prevailing in the U. K. might be more appropriate. We are, therefore, veering to the view that specific Committees of Ministers or groups of Ministers could be set up for different aspects of national security whenever strategy or policy papers are brought up for consideration of the Ministers. This flexible arrangement would provide inclusion of the concerned Ministers in-charge as well as other Ministers, the Chief Ministers and persons in public life including Members of Parliament who have specialised knowledge and experience and whose contribution would be valuable.

Even though a separate National Security Council is not in place today, mechanisms and systems do exist for consideration of national security issues. The Joint Intelligence Committee in the Cabinet Secretariat constantly interacts with the concerned ministries and agencies. There is regular consideration of the defence aspects of national security in the Chiefs of Staff Committee who have their own Secretariat. The Chairman, Joint Intelligence Committee and Heads of other agencies interact with the Service Chiefs. We have all these working even now. The core group of Secretaries is also there. They look into these matters of internal security. These mechanisms and systems have been working well but this is where the difference comes that we are not satisfied with the present dispensation.

We would like to have an overarching body which looks into the conclusions drawn, the reports sent by these different mechanisms. While these mechanisms and systems have been working well, we still feel that there is a need for strengthening the present arrangement in certain respects. But one thing is that the resource persons including experts from outside the Government need to be associated more in the study and preparation of policy papers. There is also need for having papers prepared from a central point of view instead of from one Department or Ministry. Therefore, the need for an overarching body is felt here.

On many aspects of national security a holistic approach and an integrated action plan involving a number of ministries and agencies can be better achieved if the paper is prepared in an Inter-Ministerial Group or a nodal agency instead of any one Ministry or Department. So, both aspects, the specialised aspect of a particular area of activity or an item being considered in a specialised mechanism plus the general aspect, holistic aspect from the national security angle by a body which is not unwieldy but which is an overarching body which takes into account and coordinates with all these views is necessary. And I feel that we should be able to come to the right conclusions and the right pattern of the committee very shortly. I am glad that Honourable Members have brought up this issue and given me the opportunity of clarifying the Government's stand on this issue. We are in the process of giving a final shape to our proposals and before we take a formal decision, I would solicit the views of Honourable Members on our proposals on the NSC. This is what I would like to say. It is more or less ready, in its final stages and before losing any more time, I would come back to Honourable Members for their views.

The third point which has been raised prominently is on the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT). We have a very interesting, but rather disappointing situation that for a full month there has been what is known as a review conference on NPT in New York. I would not like to be critical on what happened there. Our position being clear, I have not been able to understand what was achieved in that Conference; maybe, I will be enlightened by those who participated in that in due course. But as of now, I find that what was achieved was only the indefinite extension of the NPT as it exists. Right from the beginning, right from 1968 when NPT came into existence, India has taken a view and that view is that NPT as it was drafted, as it was accepted, is discriminatory. It allows vertical proliferation, it divides the world into nuclear haves and nuclear have-nots and NPT is actually meant, in effect, to work against the have-nots and those who by their own efforts might become thresh-

old states. Their idea is 'we have had it; we will continue to have it but no one else will be allowed to have it'. Simply, this has not worked. This have neither brought in disarmament nor brought in any restriction on countries becoming unclear, going nuclear. Both the things have happened and both were supposed to be stopped by the NPT. Now, if both the objects have failed, I fail to see why a Treaty like this is being continued indefinitely. It only means that the present situation and worse that can follow should continue indefinitely; that is what it means.

It goes against the grain of our policy. Therefore, we do not accept it and I would like to say something very pertinent, very significant. While representatives of states were talking about the NPT, what happened during this one month? The following happened. This is taken from a document of the 'Green-Peace' might be one of the NGOs. I am not vouching for absolute accuracy. But I would like to say what has been happening. This is number one:

"While diplomats met during the past month at the United Nations Nuclear Non-proliferation talks: Britain sent its newest Trident nuclear submarine on patrol... On Saturday April 29th, the Vanguard submarine went on its second patrol. Vanguard carries up to 96 to 100-kiloton nuclear warheads on its complement of new Trident missiles. Each missile has a 4500 mile range and each warhead has a killing capacity equivalent to 640 Hiroshima bombs."

This has been happening while they are talking about NPT. Number two is:

"France inaugurated a new above-ground nuclear testing facility. At the end of April, Prime Minister Edouard Balladur inaugurated a laser facility near Bordeaux for simulation testing of nuclear weapons. The facility is estimated to cost six billion French Francs.

On Sunday, May 7th, Jacques Chirac, the elected President of France said that France would resume testing if military experts advised it."

That was before he was elected. After he was elected,

“He told the New Zealand Prime Minister that France might conduct five to seven tests before concluding its testing programme.”

So, everything is business as usual. During that one month when they were talking about whether NPT is to continue or not to continue, whether it is to continue with changes or with no changes, even at that time, there is nothing like a pause, there is nothing like a rethinking. It is just a matter of taking the whole thing in such a non-serious manner that we go on talking but we go on doing whatever we do on the other side. There is a long list of what Russia has been doing, what the United States has been doing, what others have been doing and all this. I do not have to go into details. I only have to say that this is not acceptable to us. Therefore, we have not accepted it.

We will try. We will continue our efforts for a genuine nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and the only positive document which is there on the Table right now, and which has been lying on the Table for the last seven years, is the 1988 Action Plan given by the then Prime Minister of India, late Shri Rajiv Gandhi in the Special Session on Disarmament. It has not been improved upon. It has not been rejected. It has not even been considered as it ought to be considered. It only means that all this that is happening there is totally against our own view. This needs to be given a new turn. We have to do that. We cannot simply give up and say ‘So many people have done it. So we cannot simply stop’. No, We cannot stop. We will have to continue with this. We have a view. That view is the correct view.

You cannot have haves and have-nots in the nuclear field. They may take 20 years or they may take 15 years, but within a particular time unless we aim at total and complete disarmament, disarmament is never going to happen, never going to come about in

this country. There has been too much of smuggling of nuclear material. This is known. We read it in newspapers every day. It is happening in so many other countries whom I need not name. Is it the right atmosphere for disarmament? Is it for disarmament that the world is, really, trying for continuing the NPT indefinitely?

We do not think so. I am sure that all the sections of the House will agree that this Conference has not ended in something which is useful for humanity. We stand for complete abolition of all weapons of mass destruction—nuclear and other weapons also. This is the position and I am sure that the House will appreciate the position of the Government on this.

The other question which was raised was about a War Memorial. I think it has taken a long time. But the position is like this. On 1st March, the Chiefs of Staff Committee recommended construction of a War Memorial at Dhaula Kuan in 32 acres of land opposite Defence Service Officers Institute. As the project is of national importance, designs and models are proposed to be prepared on the basis of an open national competition. After the selection of design and model of the National War Memorial, a decision on the construction of the Memorial will be taken.

Then, about the War Museum also, a question was raised and the position is that the Services Headquarters have been requested to locate an appropriate site for the proposed War Museum. Regrettably, this also has taken too long a time and there have been too many views. There has been some difficulty in coming to a final view. After the site is located, necessary action to establish the War Museum will be taken.

One rather good suggestion which came from one of the Honourable Members is that the period of Colour Service be reduced to seven years and on release from the Army, the soldiers be absorbed in para-military forces or State police forces. Now this has

its pros; this has its cons. But the suggestion on the whole is good. We could make some changes and modification in it. We are taking it up for examination, detailed examination. It has the advantage that the colour service is reduced and at the same time, he is not sent home. He is able to find a berth in the para-military forces while he is still active, still young and still has some experience which he has gained for seven years in the Army. Therefore, the advantage seems to be on both sides. But we have to see that about 20,000-25,000 jobs per year have to be created. Now, whether the total recruitment in police forces in the States can find 20,000-25,000 slots apart from the local aspirations of the youth there, who would like to come into the police forces, how much can we accommodate—these are matters on which we will have to consult the State governments. But the suggestion is good and I would like to say that it will be examined in depth.

Points have been raised about housing shortage. I agree that there is shortage and I understand that this year, the additional allocation will fund the construction. Allocation has been given and it will construct the additional accommodation for married officers—506 quarters, for JCOs—505 quarters and for other ranks—4215 quarters—5226 quarters in all. The Service Headquarters are also authorised to hire private accommodation. This has had the effect of reducing the deficiencies and increasing the satisfaction levels. But the ultimate solution lies in having our own self-contained accommodation, the way we want it by the design we want it. Rented accommodation will be only a stop-gap.

A question was raised, which is a serious question, about the upgradation of the MIG-21 (Bis). There has been some error in the statements made.

Let me put the record straight. The MIG-21 (Bis) aircraft was inducted in the IAF in 1977. As of now, the MIG-21 (Bis) has served only for over 15 years. Technological advances over the last decade

especially in the field of airborne radar weapons and navigation attack system have made it possible to improve the combat effectiveness of the MIG-21 (Bis) substantially which was not feasible earlier. The current proposal includes adaptation of powerful air interception radar, advance air to air missile, air to ground precision, guided weapons and an accurate navigational attack defence system. I must say that earlier I had not heard about these improvements being possible. I came to know about it only four years back and since then we have been trying to mount these things and get this upgradation done. These improvements were not available ten years ago. The upgradation that is being considered holds the promise to improve the combat effectiveness of the aircraft substantially. So this is the position. We would not like to lose any more time in doing this. I know that all the investigations, all the efforts are being made. They are in final stages and I think it will fructify.

Something was said about Jaguars also. Jaguar aircraft was initially procured without the black box. The same was added subsequently. Now the position is that, initially 16 Jaguar aircrafts were taken on loan from the RAF in 1979. These aircrafts did not have a black box as the Royal Air Force had not sought the same in their standard of preparation for their aircraft. However, when our own aircrafts were purchased in 1980, 1981, they were with the black box fitted as our SOP required the same. This is the position. It is not that we just bought Jaguars without the black box. It is not true. We hired the first 16. They did not have the black box because they were not required to have the black box as they were at that time.

I think, these were the important points, points of policy raised in the debate. If there is anything I have missed, I am prepared to answer, if I can, otherwise, I can send the answers to the Honourable Members.

Mahatma Gandhi : the Tallest Indian of the Century

IT GIVES ME great pleasure to speak before this distinguished gathering about the life, work and vision of Mahatma Gandhi, the tallest Indian of the 20th century, on this occasion when we commemorate his 125th birth anniversary here at UNESCO. I may add here that he had said on many occasions that he would live for 125 years. According to his wish, if his wish had been fulfilled, he would be alive today and with us. He did not take into account the bullet of the assassin. But for that, he would have been with us. He was hale and hearty at seventy nine. He was walking faster than many younger people and we all thought that we would see the day when he would complete his hundred years and go on to 125 years. It just occurs to me on this occasion that this coincidence of his wish as well as what we are celebrating today or observing today would have been for a different purpose. Gandhi is one among a very select group of truly eminent world leaders in our century. The theme of this lecture series, "Gandhi and the Global village" which is completely appropriate to this conjuncture and this forum, leads me to reappraise the relevance of the Gandhian legacy to the people of India, and the relevance of the Mahatma's vision to the future of humanity.

Over and above the debate on Gandhian theory and practice in India, it is appropriate that UNESCO should celebrate the Mahatma's birth anniversary as an event of worldwide significance. Gandhi can well and truly be described as the greatest theorist and practitioner of non-violence and tolerance in our times. He also sought to awaken a novel moral consciousness in human kind. It is, therefore, natural that thinkers of sensitivity and distinction throughout the

world should reflect upon what he said—and how he acted—in order to gain a fuller understanding of his discourse and its implications for the future, as humanity approaches a new millennium.

The founding Charter of UNESCO places upon it a profound responsibility in promoting creative interaction between different cultures and world views, just as it also placed upon this organisation the responsibility of bringing the people of the world together in mutual understanding and in peaceful coexistence. The Constitution of UNESCO states that “since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defence of peace must be constructed.” This is a sentiment entirely Gandhian in letter and spirit, since the violence and conflict in the minds of men and women, Gandhi believed, lay at the very roots of the anguish and discord of our times. For this very reason, once the minds of men and women are rid of violence and conflict, not only individuals and communities within nations, but also nations within the world community, could come together in creative endeavour to meet the great challenges that face them.

I am deeply conscious of the fact that we are meeting today in the beautiful city of Paris, which occupies so distinctive a place in philosophical reflection and in humanist thought in the contemporary world. I am, therefore, encouraged to raise some basic questions about the human condition. When we turn to the fundamental issues of our times; the questions of war and peace in the nuclear age; the problems of production and distribution in a post-modern era; and the globalisation of economic and information systems, which have at once combined as well as segregated a variety of identities, then the need for discourses which address themselves to these questions and find imaginative answers to them becomes compelling. I believe that those engaged in reflection on these issues will profit greatly by examining Gandhian thought and action. The content and range of the ideas expressed by the Mahatma, no less than his translation of those ideas into practice, are

indeed remarkable in many ways. I am combining thought and action because that is what Mahatma Gandhi always believed in. He used to say that one ounce of action is better than tonnes of thought without any action.

In any exploration of the seminal ideas generated by Mahatma Gandhi, and the courses of action he embarked upon, it would be profitable to recall the cultural milieu in which Gandhi was born in 1869, and the influences, Indian and Western, which shaped his mind as he reached adulthood. Gandhi was a child in the State of Gujarat in western India, a State which has looked across the waters of the Arabian Sea to West Asia, and to the European world beyond, since time immemorial. The Gandhi family was a family of status; the future Mahatma's father pursued the liberal vocation of civil service in a small principality.

The third quarter of the 19th century was an era in which India had been fully drawn into the imperial system of Great Britain. Not surprisingly, this integration affected her material and economic condition, no less than it affected her social and political condition, in a very disadvantageous fashion. Yet the colonial situation can best be understood as a situation of dialectical complexity; the subversion of the economy or the cultural fabric of India was accompanied by a certain measure of regeneration, in the spheres of social production as well as in the sphere of intellectual reflection.

While the epicentres of political and economic activity in colonial India, namely, the port-cities of Bombay, Madras and Calcutta, witnessed to the full the impact of colonial rule, the remote towns of Porbandar and Rajkot in Gujarat, where the young Gandhi grew up, were largely indigenous in content and texture. The cultural impact of the West was even more marginal. Indeed, the emotional and intellectual consciousness of young Gandhi, the notion of the sacred and the profane in his being, was largely shaped by the saints of devotional Hinduism. These saints wrote lyrical

poetry of deep compassion and profound spiritual content which linked the sensibility of successive generations of Gujaratis for centuries. Gandhi's autobiographical writings reveal the special impact which one of these saints, Narasinh Mehta, made upon his consciousness. A composition by Mehta, even though its literary flavour is lost in translation, conveys the social and moral concerns central to that devotional theism. It says:

He is Vaishnava who identifies himself with others'
sorrows

And in doing so has no pride about him

Such a one respects everyone and speaks ill of none....

He labours neither under infatuation nor delusion....

And the poet says: His presence purifies his surroundings.

Such a person is called a vaishnava i. e. a pious person.

These and such values of devotional Hinduism were manifest directly in the Gandhi household through the intense religiosity of his mother, Putlibai. This created in the psyche of young Gandhi a sensitivity to matters of the spirit—indeed, a quality of existential immersion in religious concerns—which later blossomed into a powerful force behind the adult Gandhi's intervention in social, political and economic affairs. But the influence of saintly poets like Narasinh Mehta was by no means the only influence upon the Gandhi household. The commercial communities of western India, in pursuit of an eclecticism so characteristic of the Hindus were also deeply drawn to the metaphysical principles of Jainism. The Jain way of life rested upon a calculus of austere rationality, underpinned by a belief in the multifacetedness of truth, or *anekantavada*. Belief in this principle enabled a Jain to extend a sympathetic consideration to points of view other than his own. Indeed, this remarkable capacity of Jainism profoundly influenced Gandhi in his career as he led various movements in South Africa and in India.

Gandhi's journey as a young student to the great metropolis of London to pursue studies in law, brought him into the very heart of

world culture. The initial shock experienced by the young Gujarati in London was formidable. But it speaks volumes of his resilience, inner strength and self-confidence, that he was soon at ease in his new surroundings, combining the study of law with a widening of the mind through the exploration of Western culture. Here the influences of his childhood interacted with the new situation and enriched his intellectual and philosophical experience. Apart from the classics of Hindu and Buddhist literature, he also read some of the seminal Christian texts. Further, the social and economic consequences of industrialisation made a tremendous impression on his sensitive mind ; and probably played a vital role in shaping his attitude towards industrial societies as a whole. After completing his studies, Gandhiji returned to Gujarat, still committed to the notion of making his mark in life as a lawyer.

Yet Gandhi had barely returned to India, when legal business took him to Pretoria in 1893. South Africa, at that juncture, was a polity in which the first steps towards the construction of apartheid were being taken by a bigoted white community. The gross inequality to which coloured and black residents were subjected, touched Gandhi to the quick, and apart from attending to legal business, he entered public life in order to combat racial discrimination.

The racial conflict in South Africa, in the last decade of the 19th century, exercised a profound influence upon Gandhi. On the one hand, he reached out to public activity in order to redress the situation. On the other, he set upon an interior journey of moral exploration which was destined to make his life a quest for self-realisation, as well as an epic struggle against racial discrimination and political subjugation in Africa and Asia. Gandhiji later observed of his sojourn in South Africa: "Here it was that the religious force within me became a living force. I had gone to South Africa....for gaining my own livelihood. But... I found myself in search of God and striving for self-realisation."

Gandhi's anguish at the state of South Africa prompted him to widen his religious and philosophical education through a critical reading of texts other than those of Hinduism and Jainism. He also reached out to figures like John Ruskin, the Christian Socialist; and Leo Tolstoy, the Russian novelist and philosopher, who sought to apply the principles of Christianity to the day-to-day problems of human existence. From Ruskin, Gandhi imbibed the value of the dignity of labour, manual or intellectual; and from Tolstoy he gained an understanding of how love and compassion could change humanity for the better. But although Gandhiji delved deep into the religious and philosophical literature of the West, this exploration largely brought out the original faiths ingrained in him. As an eminent scholar of classical India Prof. A. L. Basham has put it, "Gandhi's ideas were fully in keeping with Indian tradition and were probably developed from notions which he absorbed in his contact with the West... His (Gandhi's) genius was even more successful than that of earlier reformers in harmonising non-Indian ideas with the Hindu Dharma and giving them a thoroughly Indian character; and he did this only by relating them to earlier doctrines or concepts."

The distinctive relationship which Gandhi sought to establish between social and moral action needs to be spelt out a little at the juncture, because of the flood of illuminating light it throws upon his development as a political actor in South Africa; upon his epic role, slightly later, in the liberation of India; and upon the promise which Gandhian discourse holds out, for the possible resolution of the problems which haunt humanity towards the end of the 20th century.

Despite assessments to the contrary, it seems reasonable to hold that the political actor in Gandhi was throughout his long career subordinate to the moral actor since the Mahatma was ultimately concerned with individual and collective salvation, rather than with purely mundane matters. The fires which raged within Gandhi can best be sensed in his own words:

“The politician in me has never dominated a single decision of mine, and if I seem to take part in politics, it is only because politics encircles us today like the coils of a snake from which one cannot get out, no matter how much one tries. I wish, therefore, to wrestle with the snake... Quite selfishly, as I wish to live in peace in the midst of a bellowing storm howling around me, I have been experimenting with myself and my friends by introducing religion into politics. Let me explain what I mean by religion. It is not the Hindu religion... but the religion... which binds one indissolubly to the truth within and which ever purifies.”

This creative synthesis, flowing from a fusion of the moral anguish of Gandhi with his social concerns as a political actor, is eloquently reflected in a novel and revolutionary mode of political action known to us as *Satyagraha*, or soul-force, which he first crafted in South Africa.

The context in which *Satyagraha* was developed as a political weapon needs to be highlighted. In 1906, the Government of Transvaal enacted legislation which required Indians to register themselves as residents, thus denying to them their natural rights as citizens of the British Empire. To protest against this ‘Black Act’, Gandhiji organised a meeting in Johannesburg. The Mahatma had contemplated the adoption of a resolution encouraging Indians in South Africa to resist discriminatory legislation. However, what was designed as conventional protest against an unjust law acquired a unique significance when a participant declared “in the name of God that he would never submit to that law and advised all present to do likewise.” In focusing upon the heightened moral import of the resolution, Gandhi pointed out that it had become something of the highest significance: “Everyone must search his own heart and if the inner voice assures him that he has the requisite strength to carry him through, then only should he pledge himself and then only will his pledge bear fruit.” And this he repeated several times during the Indian freedom movement.

Thus was born *Satyagraha* as a weapon for fighting untruth and oppression in the world. As spelt out over the time by Gandhi, there were distinctive features to the moral code of the true *satyagrahi*: he believed that truth could have more than one facet; he further assumed that the conscience of his adversary could be touched and transformed through non-violent protest. He said times without number, "I have no hatred for the British, no hatred for anyone; what we want to change is the system." Most important of all, he believed that no truthful contest ever yielded a victor and a vanquished; instead, the reconciliation which followed *Satyagraha* brought the former adversaries together in a firm bond of friendship underpinned by their spiritual uplift.

The potency of *Satyagraha*, the novel instrument of political protest devised by Gandhi, was reflected in the substantial gains which he was able to secure for the Indian community in South Africa before he left for India in 1914. General J. C. Smuts, who negotiated a settlement with Gandhi was, therefore, delighted when he learnt of the Mahatma's departure for his homeland. "The saint has left our shores," Smuts observed, "I sincerely hope forever." There was another sequel to the struggle against racial discrimination which Gandhi had waged in South Africa earlier in the century. The black community and its leaders too, remembered the power of non-violence; and despite the brutal authority characterised by the regime of apartheid, they ultimately triumphed over it through a non-violent yet militant struggle. When President Nelson Mandela visited Delhi in 1990, he referred to the Gandhian legacy in South Africa. "We have since been influenced by Gandhi's perception and tradition of non-violent struggle", he observed.

When Gandhi returned to India in 1914 after an interval of two decades he noticed enormous changes in the political scene. By the second decade of the 20th century, the middle classes in the subcontinent were fully drawn into a nationalist stance, ideologically and organisationally. Between the upper middle classes, on the

one hand, and the relatively less well-off peasants, artisans and workers, on the other, stood a great gulf of wealth and consciousness which was difficult to bridge through the conventional mechanisms of modern politics. The colonial state had, in fact, exploited those who laboured in the fields and factories much more than it had exploited the middle classes. Yet the nationalism of the well-to-do was articulate and organised, while the nationalism of the poor and deprived lacked organisation and modern ideology. Indeed, the poor could only voice their anguish through seemingly spontaneous and localised upsurges that were suppressed forthwith by the colonial state. In fact, even in the 19th century, there had been several small and big uprisings in the tribal areas against the exploitation by British-backed feudals. Some of them continued for many years, but eventually all of them collapsed under the weight of superior weapons and deeper intrigues to divide the tribals. So, in the beginning decades of the twentieth century, the question of the anguish of the deprived classes being linked to the aspirations of the middle classes in a purposeful and mass-based nationalism, was the question to which no one could provide a ready answer.

When Gandhi addressed himself to the Indian situation in 1914, he chose as his base the *ashram*, or the spiritual retreat, as an institution ideally suited to the work he had in view. His dialogue with the middle classes, at this juncture, confirmed his view that these classes were united in the desire for liberation from colonial bondage. Within the span of a few years, he further discovered that the peasants, artisans and workers saw the overthrow of British Rule as an essential requirement of their material and spiritual welfare. Since it was difficult to reach these classes through the idiom of modern politics, liberal or radical, Gandhi took recourse to popular religious imagery as a potent means to rally the poor to the cause of nationalism and at the same time to heighten the level of their social consciousness. He deliberately built closer identification with the poor and downtrodden by adopting their half-naked clothing and hut-dwelling way of life. It was a genuine mingling of hearts and

minds and had a lasting effect. In this process, he discovered an untapped reservoir of popular energy which he harnessed into nationwide agitations, based upon the principles of *Satyagraha*.

The initial Gandhian experiments in *Satyagraha* in India were on a small scale. They aimed at resolving the grievances of specific groups of peasants and workers, at the same time as they expanded their political horizons. When the First World War came to an end, in which the people of India had extended substantial support to Great Britain, Gandhi embarked upon a movement of *Satyagraha* involving India as a whole. Indeed, in a span of three decades, Gandhi initiated a number of nationwide protests with two strategic purposes in view: first, to knit together the different social, linguistic and religious communities within India into modern nationhood; and secondly, to demonstrate to the British that their Empire over South Asia would have to be dismantled at the earliest.

The nationwide *Satyagraha* campaigns waged by Gandhi within India rank among the biggest popular mobilisations in the history of humankind. I have already touched upon the moral content of *Satyagraha* at its moment of birth in South Africa in 1906. When we relate *Satyagraha* in South Africa to *Satyagraha* in India, it would be appropriate to evoke the social dimensions of the latter. The population of India, at that juncture, was approximately 400 million. Roughly 75 per cent of this population living in the villages, was the constituency which Gandhi sought to draw into nationalist politics through *satyagrahi* action. To say that he fully succeeded in doing so would be untrue. However, the flag of nationalism was firmly planted by Gandhi in every substantial village in India; and in every village of any size a dozen or more peasant households were actively drawn into the orbit of a struggle. The demographic scale of the nationalist movement was breathtaking, since it literally mobilised 10 per cent of the nation, that is, about forty million persons, in non-violent action against the greatest imperial power of that period. In fact, it succeeded splendidly because it was non-violent.

Perhaps the dexterous artistry of *satyagrahi* action and the ingenious manner in which symbolic action, backed by rudimentary organisation, drew tens upon millions across the land into movements of resistance is poignantly captured by the Dandi March of 1930. The Movement was directed against a tax on salt, which affected adversely even the poorest peasant household in India. To signify his disapproval of the tax on salt, Gandhi selected a small band of devoted followers, 79 in all, representing different sections of Indian society. The Mahatma and his *satyagrahis* marched from Ahmedabad, in Western India, to a village called Dandi, on the Arabian Sea. By traversing 241 miles in measured marches over the period of a few weeks, Gandhi and his gallant band of *satyagrahis* united a nation of 400 million against the British Empire.

The incredible economy of Gandhian action, the inverse relationship between the scale of *Satyagraha* and the demographic momentum of popular arousal, illustrate the tactical genius of the Mahatma at the same time as they testify to the vast numbers of men and women who were drawn into political action. Indeed, the cost effectiveness of the 'Short March'—as I would like to describe the trek from Ahmedabad to Dandi—demonstrates the superiority of *satyagrahi* action over conventional modes of political protest, constitutional or violent. And the crowning feature of that action was, of course, that it was unarmed, non-violent and, therefore, repression-and-suppression-proof.

Despite the massive and countrywide dimensions of the movement, its absolute discipline and restraint were remarkable. Gandhi believed firmly in the purity of the means and in the immutable correspondence between ends and means. He suspended a countrywide *Satyagraha* Movement abruptly on a single incident of violence committed by the people at a place called Chauri Chaura in the State of Uttar Pradesh. So widespread was the disappointment and so deep the genuine resentment on this suspension that even Jawaharlal Nehru expressed his serious reservation on the Mahatma's

decision. But Gandhi stuck to his guns and asserted that the means adopted in any *Satyagraha* movement must invariably be non-violent. The Movement was suspended but the message registered in the minds of the people indelibly.

The triumph of non-violent protest over racial discrimination in South Africa; or colonial domination in South Asia; does not exhaust the creative potential of *Satyagraha* as an instrument of revolutionary action and social transformation. Indeed, in its depth and comprehensiveness, Gandhian thought and action reach out to life in all its rich diversity: to questions of social production and the distribution of wealth; to the nexus between the state, civil society and the citizen; to the manner in which the basic unit of society, namely the family, relates to the individual, on the one hand, and to the social order, on the other; and last but not the least; to the character of the sacred and the profane as a guide to human beings in their journey across life to the worlds which lie beyond. The sheer range of Gandhian thought and practice, therefore, makes it one of the richest sources of reflection and guide to action today, across the decades which separate us from the vibrant and living truth of the Mahatma. Its only limitations are those inherent in the society and the state. But who, except God, is immune to limitations?

Any inquiry into the contemporary relevance of *satyagrahi* thought and practice should locate itself in Gandhi's understanding of non-violence, no less than in his understanding of social power as the basis of political action. The Mahatma repeatedly observed that non-violence, in his view, was the weapon of the strong rather than of the weak; just as it was also a weapon which drew victor and vanquished into a common association of reconciliation and moral regeneration. Gandhi's concept of power was of a peace with his understanding of non-violence. Not surprisingly, he looked askance at the power which grew out of the barrel of the gun, or rested upon the ephemeral calculus of wealth. For the Mahatma, the most legitimate form of power came through welding together popular

aspirations and the life of truth into a movement of social transformation and moral uplift. The struggles which he set in motion in South Africa, and later in India, were excellent examples of the aggregation of non-violent power and its use in the social and political domain for the good of the people.

What are the likely, possible and desirable arenas of *satyagrahi* action in our times? Since we are located in an age when the complete annihilation of human civilization through weapons of mass destruction continues to be a possibility, it is relevant to ask whether the Mahatma's concept of conflict resolution has any role to play in relations between sovereign nations as well as those between different sections within the nations. At the risk of touching upon a theme which may appear parochial yet has a worldwide potential that needs to be explored, I would contend that the Gandhian sense of power profoundly influenced the Foreign Policy of India after independence in 1947. This Policy, as is well known, sought to bring together the newly liberated nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America—with their common memory of domination—on a common platform to confer self-confidence upon polities which lacked the sinews of conventional strength in the post-World War II era.

As classically formulated, Non-alignment probably assumes a different significance from the one it had in the third quarter of our century. But as a principle of equity and sanity, which enabled the developing nations to speak with a voice of dignity in the fora of the world, Non-alignment is as relevant today as it was when it was enunciated. Although the Non-Aligned Movement took shape in 1962, the concept predates Indian independence. The principle was clearly enunciated in a resolution of the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress in 1946. Yet in relating Gandhian principles to the conduct of world affairs, I want to go beyond Non-alignment, to touch upon the vital issue of nuclear disarmament in our times. Indeed, our deep commitment to Gandhian values, as a

nation which looks up to the Mahatma as its most eminent citizen in the 20th century, is eloquently reflected in the proposal which initiated in 1988, for a phased and universal programme of nuclear disarmament. Rajiv Gandhi articulated this vision to rid the world of nuclear weapons at the Special Session of the UN General Assembly on Disarmament. As heirs to Mahatma Gandhi, we look upon our proposal for universal nuclear disarmament as Gandhian in spirit, just as we look upon it as a measure which can make the world a safer place for generations yet to come. Since UNESCO is dedicated to the promotion of world peace, I take this opportunity to reiterate the outline of this essentially Gandhian proposal for universal nuclear disarmament. I commend this proposal before these assembled men and women of scholarship in the conviction that they will so influence world opinion that the dream of universal nuclear disarmament will become a reality within a finite, stipulated time.

The question of nuclear disarmament is only one of the issues on the agenda of *satyagrahi* action on our times. No less significant are issues relating to the generation of wealth between and within nations in the world community; or questions pertaining to the articulation of local and regional identities within existing polities; and finally, to the vulnerability of the nation-state itself, in the face of emerging supranational regional organisations and changing technological and information systems. I shall touch upon these problems separately, with a view to locating them within the Gandhian discourse. I shall also try to draw from the Gandhian discourse, possible lines of solution to these problems.

Perhaps it would be appropriate to dwell upon the question of wealth generation and its distribution, in the first instance. There is a widespread yet erroneous belief, within India as well as outside India, that Gandhi lacked a full understanding of industrial societies; and that he may have been dismissive about the increasing pace and impact of industrialisation in the 20th century. Nothing could be

farther from the truth. As a student of law in London, Gandhi explored industrialisation in Great Britain intensively and set out his understanding of this phenomenon in a work called 'Hind Swaraj.' The Mahatma's quarrel was not with industrialisation as such but with situations which reduced human beings to helpless instruments of technology in the name of development. This dehumanisation was anathema to Gandhi, whether it emanated in the Capitalist system or the Communist system. I still remember how Gandhi was condemned in both camps, whatever may be the encomiums he is earning after he died. His trusteeship principle, namely that those who possess wealth must do so as trustees of the poor, was equally inconvenient to both camps and sounded very odd at the time, as it does even today *prima facie*. Yet I wish thinkers of today go into this principle deeply. You cannot oppose wealth; you cannot abjure wealth. It has many good qualities. But what about concentration of wealth? That is the basic question. I have every hope that economic relations eventually will need to be redefined on the basis of a new meaning to be attached to the concepts of ownership and possession. What is ownership? Who owns the air, Who owns the oceans? Who owns the land? The assertion that all land belongs to God is fully ingrained in Indian thought since time immemorial and Gandhi's principle derives from it.

These concerns were wedded to two additional concerns which had not been expressed by any of Gandhi's contemporaries, though they are forcefully articulated among 'Green' activists today; namely, the baneful consequences of mindless consumerism, on the one hand; and the need for eco-friendly development, on the other. In his writings on social and economic questions, which are exploratory rather than definitive, Gandhi anticipates the notion of sustainable development at the same time as he expresses the need for devising systems of social production and environmental protection which are supportive rather than antagonistic towards each other. The views of the Mahatma on such issues, which are sustained by an acute sense of the practical and the desirable, constitute a rich

source of insights about economic growth in developing and developed societies. He asserted, crisply, that in God's creation, there is enough for man's need but not for man's greed.

Gandhi's plea for sustainable development did not exhaust his concern for the processes of growth in modern society. Indeed, if only tangentially, he was deeply concerned with market and command systems as engines of increasing production in the modern world. That the market, if left to its own devices, becomes an obstruction rather than a stimulus to production, is one of the central arguments in 'Hind Swaraj' to which I have referred earlier. Yet the Mahatma was equally aware of the fact that command systems of social production, too, can throw up their own distinctive pathologies.

Since the genesis of Indian culture in classical antiquity, there exists in our collective consciousness a deeply lodged belief that in the social, no less than in the metaphysical domain, the 'Middle Path' is the most desirable of all paths. This notion was initially articulated by Gautama Buddha in the 6th century BC at the first flowering of our civilization. Men of politics no less than men of religion were deeply influenced by this notion over the centuries. In the years since 1947, the notion of the 'Middle Path' was one of the central principles behind official policies—particularly policies of economic growth. Very recently, the notion of the 'Middle Path' has been reiterated in respect of initiatives connected with economic growth. What sustains this remarkable continuity is probably the epic scale of Indian society and the culturally plural cluster of communities which constitute its social body.

The notion of the 'Middle Path' as a sensible means to economic growth is powerfully endorsed in the writings of the Mahatma on social and economic questions, though these writings are tentative and exploratory. And its legitimacy goes even deeper in the Indian past. Here is a fertile field for intellectual inquiry by those engaged in social action, in different parts of the world.

Last but not the least, I would like to speak of the great political disquiet of our times, as it stems from the crisis of identities, particularly local and regional identities, within the system of nation-states. Gandhi was very alive to issues of identity, partly because of the plural character of the Indian society and partly also because the creation of modern nationhood in India, in the place of an older civilizational bond, meant the generation of an entirely novel overarching identity. The *satyagrahi* in Mahatma Gandhi handled this task with a sensitivity and skill rare in the history of social and political movements in our times.

What were the factors behind Gandhi's conspicuous success in mobilising different social groups in support of the struggle for nationhood in India? Further, to what extent are these factors relevant to the handling of issues of local and regional identities within nations in the world today? There can be no easy answers to these questions, since the problem is one of tremendous complexity. However, the manner in which Gandhi conceptualised the role of the citizen in the modern state; and the manner also in which he actually drew the citizen into social and political activity provides clues to the reasons behind his success. At the very outset, he did not look upon the individual and society as being in the political domain. Instead, he sought to reach out to the individual in society as the basis of social action: not the individual, not the society, but the individual in society which means that the individual has to be related to the society in which he is functioning in order to make the entire society go forward. As he relied upon his spoken words as a political actor of high moral integrity, they rippled across the fabric of society, to provide the basis of social unity on a truly monumental scale.

In the very nature of things, whether it was in South Africa in 1906, or subcontinental India in 1930, mass action could only be concerted through *satyagrahi* action and through the voluntary association of individuals, whose hearts and minds had been touched and transformed, in great movements of collective endeavour.

Gandhi believed in action and asserted that an ounce of action was better than a ton of barren ideas. Of course, by action he meant the action of a *satyagrahi*.

There are, of course, no blueprints which can provide an infallible design for individual action or for organised protest by entire communities. However, we have in Gandhian discourse the sensitivity to understand the anguish of wronged individuals or communities, just as we also have in Gandhian discourse the compassionate statecraft which through moral mediation can help resolve some of the problems that affect the contemporary world.

How, then, can we sum up the thought and practice of Mahatma Gandhi, a truly epochal figure, whose capacity for social intervention and moral praxis is reflected as much in the diverse arenas where he acted in his lifetime, as it is reflected in the relevance of his discourse to the resolution of a wide spectrum of problems long after his martyrdom in 1948? That Gandhi was a remarkable individual who developed, existentially rather than systematically, a moral code and a novel calculus of social protest is readily conceded by those engaged in reflection no less than those engaged in action in our times. Indeed, the Mahatma has made a distinctive innovation of morally oriented political action in the 20th century.

No less momentous is the fact that four decades and more after his death, the ideas which Mahatma Gandhi placed before India and the world are being acknowledged as capable of finding solutions to some of the most pressing issues faced by humankind, as we move towards a new era in which wealth generation, political organisation, social ordering and spiritual creativity are undergoing a revolutionary transformation. Seen from that perspective, Gandhi stands out as one of the towering figures of our century. Indeed, if the stature of men and women is to be measured by the fact that their ideas attain increasing validity and momentum as time passes farther and farther

beyond their own life, Gandhi stands in lonely eminence in the 20th century. Perhaps generations to come will turn to him increasingly as they wrestle with the problems of existence in an era which holds out a potential of unprecedented moral and material creativity through individual and collective human endeavour.

II

Economic Scene

Challenges Before the Public Sector Enterprises

I AM VERY happy to be present here amongst all of you on this occasion which will provide an opportunity for an exchange of views and sharing of concerns on the Central public sector.

It is an appropriate time to take stock of the achievements of the public sector in India and identify the directions that it would take in the future. The impact of the new economic policies are beginning to be felt in the economy and the public sector is also bound to be affected by these changes. It is imperative for the public sector enterprises to look at both the challenges which will emerge along with opportunities that will be thrown up.

When the present day controversy between the public and private sector raises around us in Parliament, outside Parliament, among business circles and maybe in clubs, some time I wonder, how many of us realise the history of the public sector in India. Not many executives of today, perhaps know fully about it unless they have undertaken a study of it. In any case, the experience of those days, when the private sector in India, in some areas was deliberately converted or superseded by this public sector, it would be a very interesting study. One has to go through it.

I am sure, the top officials of today were not even recruited in the IAS in those days. Because, in those days there was no IAS. It came much later. In some States we didn't have even the ICS. We only had the State services. We had our own railways, one-third of India; mind you. We had our own post offices, we had our own currency, we had everything that is needed for a State

Address while inaugurating the conference of the Chief Executives of public sector enterprises, New Delhi, 30 July 1994

and absolutely unaffected by the adjacent area whether it was British India or another State. When, after independence, we thought of integrating all the States in the Indian Union by the great Sardar Patel, there was a hue and cry that some States were prospering very well, why should they be integrated with their adjoining British Indian States, British Indian areas, where some of the facilities given to the people were not as good as in the States. I can cite examples. When the Hyderabad State was integrated in the Indian Union, one Taluka, in which we had four hospitals, had the advantage of having one hospital after integration and the other three wound up. What would the people of that area think of integration? What are the benefits of integration which accrued to the people of that area? But taking as a whole the areas which never saw the face of a doctor, also had one hospital somewhere in the Taluka-headquarter. But those who lost would never look at those who gained a hospital. They would only have dissatisfaction and more dissatisfaction as we went along.

So, these are the teething troubles of integration and when today Indian economy is sought to be integrated with the world economy, similar problems are arising. Integrate everything except my industry—that is the slogan these days. So, we can't, really, pick and choose. If you have to integrate, you have to integrate. If you don't have to integrate, build a wall by all means, if you can. Then you don't send anyone outside. After all, there was a rule in the middle ages that those who went to countries beyond the seas were not admitted into the society unless they did *prayaschitta* and all that. But that gels with the kind of walls that we want to build. You just can't build walls, you have to integrate. I will give you one example—the transport, the public transport system. In the old States, we had private operators. Yes, those buses, with those horns—*poms-poun-poun-poun*, I don't know how many of you remember them. I don't think my grandson would ever imagine that there was a horn like that. Those were the buses. We went to the bus-station. What's a bus-station? It was just open sky.

That was the bus-station. If the conductor peeped out and saw that there were too many passengers then he would not stop, he would go about a quarter of mile and stop there, leave the passengers who were to get down at that station and then push off.

The moment, road transport corporations came in the States, within two years, we started having bus shelters; within five years, we started having bus-depots, big depots where fifty-sixty buses would come at the district headquarters and other places. There is a very orderly organisation and so on and so forth. We didn't have bus depots of that kind in the old days. Why was this replaced? It was replaced with certain ideals, certain objectives and those objectives cost money. The buses didn't earn the money first and then built the bus-depots. Government gave them money for bus depots, Government gave them money for passenger shelters. Government being in a welfare state really thought of welfare as one of its foremost duties. Otherwise, there should have been such facilities even before nationalisation in which case no nationalisation would have been needed. There was immense relief to the people when the old buses were replaced by those diesel or crude oil buses. They made lot of noise. We were all so scared as children. The moment it came, we used to run away.

But then, it was a welfare state. The idea of making profits in the public sector was almost sinful. Do you remember that in the fifties, it was meant for welfare only, until Panditji, again, in the closing years of the fifties said—'no, no, this was not the idea at all that we should go on giving you money and you should go on spending it. Anybody can do this. There is such a thing as profit. That profit whether you give it to the government or not, it should be again ploughed back for expansion, for your own needs. You can't expect this to go on. When there were five undertakings, it was possible. When there are hundred undertakings, it is not possible.'

So, at least, ten years were lost in realising that a public sector is not just a charity. It has to make its own profits plus provide amenities, plus the welfare measures, the provident funds and whatever they are which never used to be there earlier. Still PSUs were able to stand on their own feet. This was a tall order in the first years. It is no longer a tall order today. Although, some people think that it can't be done, both of these can be done. It has been proved that all these can be done and still profits can be made. There is no way, you can go back to the old days when you say—yes, we make profits but we give nothing to the people who are affected, nothing to the beneficiaries, nothing to the employees. This is not possible. So, times have changed. It took one full decade to understand that public sector is not a public charity.

Today, the situation is totally different. The public sector finds itself in a quandary. Why did we have to go for Bhilai? You all know about it. We knew about it very well.

Some people said they were going to do this, do that but then Panditji said, “If you don't have a steel factory, what are you going to do?” The answer was, “We will give you steel.” Some of my friends in those days who used to come said, “Why do you need a car factory here, we will give you as many cars as you need.” So, was it possible for India to depend on cars from outside? Yes, we had a car in those days, we still have it, which became a joke that everything in the car makes a noise except the horn. Yes, we started with those cars but we stuck to those cars for forty years. Except two brands, no third brand was ever allowed to come into the country. Was it madness on the part of the Government to do that ? So, we had that protection given to the industry in the first stages, in the initial stages. In spite of all the jokes, no Sony came here. Did you see any advertisements in India—say ten years back which you see in every small country whether they can afford it or not. Everything comes from outside there.

We didn't allow any of these things to come inside. We had Bhilai because we could not do without steel. But steel would come only when those who are manufacturing it, wanted it to come. Suppose, they turn the tap off what would happen to India ? What happened in food ? There were people who wrote books, very scholarly books that India can never become self-sufficient in food. What has happened now ? When the people really take it up then nothing stops them from achieving their goal. This is what we are trying to do today. How much the people of this country are involved in the industry today? They are involved fully in agriculture. I have no worry at all about agriculture. Come what may, whatever the population. Of course, there is always a limit beyond which food can't be produced, more food can't be produced and therefore, we also want a limitation on population growth. That is a different matter. It is a matter for experts to tell us where the line is to be drawn or what is to be done.

But what is the involvement of the people in the industrialisation of this country ? Are we really able to realise their full involvement? I am sure, we don't. We have not been able to and even now I don't see that happening anywhere. You will never prosper unless you give that stake to the common people in what you are doing. There was a time when people said : "If you build a road, I don't have a car, so, why do I need a road ?" We have heard these things from our own villagers. Now, nobody says we don't want a road. They are clamouring for roads, they are clamouring for schools, they are clamouring for everything—TVs, radios, you name it. Why? Because the people have understood the advantage of it. In some cases, they have become status symbol also. If you have a TV, there is something respectable about it. If you don't have a TV and go to the next house to watch TV, then you are somehow inferior. Even if it has become a status symbol, there is something which is happening by way of change in the thinking of the people. That should be welcomed, that should be fully

channelised for industrialisation. We are not able to do that. I am really not able to think of a simple way of doing it.

There can be no simple way except you to go to the villages, you go to those areas where industries are not there at all. One is ashamed to say that there are so many districts with no industry at all. That piece of statistics does no credit to either of us, either government or the industry or the country. Can you imagine a whole district with 15 lakh, 20 lakh population where not a single industry exists. So, this is something which has to be taken up as a programme meant for the entire people of India, only then India will prosper. I am not going into any of the details. Yes, we have been having MoUs, we have broken our heads for 25 years now, at least I have 25 years experience as Minister, Chief Minister and Prime Minister. This problem has been there right from the beginning. How do you make the public sector pave its way. Some have done it, some have not done it for various reasons. Some have not done it, may be, we gave the initial money and then forgot about it. Whereas the private sector went on increasing its efficiency.

Ten years back there was a book written by Prof. Galbraith who was Ambassador here in India. He's one of the most famous persons in economic circles anywhere. There is a controversy about him as there is a controversy about any original thinker. He asked what is the difference between the Soviet Union and America or the capitalist society. He listed out the similarities, he listed out the differences about ten years ago. I don't remember the name of the book but remember what he brought out. The point was—the public sector and the private sector have certain very common features which people don't seem to realise. Efficiency for instance, there is no difference between a public sector and a private sector. If you are not efficient, you will go down whether you are public or private and we all know that many of the sick industries which

the BIFR is looking into and the Government has taken over; the textile mills, where did they come from ? Did they drop from heaven? Did they not come from the sick private industry ? So, why do we have to compare the private sector with the public sector? Is it a debate that we are engaged in ? It is not a college. This is a country. So, ten years ago, it was brought out that the differences between these systems lie in certain areas while the common features occupy a vast area.

So, where is it really pinching us. You will have to go into the matter of efficiency. Efficiency means what? Again, does efficiency only mean making profits ? Efficiency only in balance-sheets! Efficiency would mean that it has an element of social welfare also built into it. Have we really produced a model? Have we produced a formula where the question of social welfare also is built into it? You are running a huge industry and the government has to come and lay a road for you, the Executive Engineer has to do the job or the Education Department has to come and run a high school for the children of your employees, what kind of efficiency is this ? Which means that the government has to do all the expenditure, the profits have to be going to all of you—the public sector, whatever the sector or the management. This is not efficiency. Efficiency today is a comprehensive concept. The industry goes on despoiling the atmosphere, the environment which has been happening for 200 years in the Western countries. Thanks to the Green Parties and so on, it has now stopped or at least is going to stop. What is the efficiency of that industry, I want to ask you. If you are going to simply deprive the coming generations of what they should live on, just because we want to live more comfortably for the next 20 years, 30 years then what is the efficiency of that industry?

Gandhiji, sixty or seventy years ago, foresaw all these. He said so strongly about the environment and the way the industries were destroying the environment. He said many harsh things about

the Western industry, big industrial complexes of those days. Now, today, we cannot possibly replicate what Gandhiji exactly said. But the point is that there is real meaning in what he said. He just said something which only a person who thinks of centuries and centuries ahead can say. He was a seer. Now we have that as our own legacy. We cannot run it down. We have to keep that in view. The public sector has to keep that in view and become a model industry. It doesn't matter how many units we have and how many are wound up. It does not matter what we do with the units which are sick. They may become sick, they may die, they may live, they may become healthy. All these things happen to individuals. The same things happen to the industries. But the general trend is what we have to seek.

There is a revolution going on everywhere in the other countries. In the countries which went for very rapid industrialisation, the disparities are increasing. They are becoming a problem today. And we started our industrialisation on the New Policy. The first question was what about Exit Policy. Today, why is it that nobody talks about Exit Policy, three years after we started it. Because we had an answer and we were bold enough to give that answer—not here but in their midst. We didn't say one thing here and one thing in Davos. We said the same thing everywhere. And they understood that 'these fellows are not easily gullible'. They have their own balance. They have their own "Middle Path". There is no way we can disturb them. They have understood it and they have also applied what we said to their conditions. And they said there is something sensible in what this person is saying. So, you have people coming, lining up to invest in India. It is not because we lured them into anything. We didn't. We made a clear statement of our policies. We were not running after them, they were not running after us. We were at a distance. Yes, they waited for a year—two years. They found that the things have started working here and then they have decided, let us see. After all the decision is theirs.

So, these are some of the things where harmony is needed. If we go on having this debate between the private sector and public sector interminably, this will not result in anything good, anything beneficial for the country. We have never said that we are going to wind up the public sector. That was very clear. Whether it is in Davos or any other place, we said no. We are not for total privatisation. Privatisation is a sacred word in those countries today. Privatisation is not a sacred word here. It is a neutral word, yes. But it doesn't mean that we put an Aligarh lock on the gates of all the public sector undertakings and say you take it as it is. No, they are not for sale. India is not for sale. Our industries are not just for sale outright. But at the same time you cannot be sacking. The calf cannot be getting milk from the cow until the cow dies. There is a period beyond which there is what is called weaning away. When is that period going to come? If you can't tell us, who will? This is what I want to know. And please, consider these things.

The existence of the private sector or the public sector is no longer in debate. When we talked about 'Mixed Economy', when Panditji said there will be 'Mixed Economy' in the country, when in spite of all the pressures he did not put agriculture under the public sector and bring collectives into this country, there was a great imagination of a great builder of a nation. He was able to see that this is not possible in the field of agriculture. He was able to see that both should coexist in the country. He was able to see the minus points of both the systems and thought of a system which avoided these minus points although it was slow, although people laughed at it in the beginning, 'Oh! It is neither this nor that. You just cannot have only this or only that.' Now the same countries are telling us what is 'Mixed Economy'? How did you do it? How is it that you have got such flourishing private industries and also public industries? How is it? Because 50 years ago, 40 years ago we consciously took a decision. Our leader consciously took a decision and the Government went on doing it. We made

mistakes. We are still making mistakes. But it is better to make mistakes and learn from them than not doing anything at all and sitting idle, only debating. So, we have come to this stage where competition is there. At the same time certain advantages are there. How do we balance the two? How do you make the advantages overweigh the competition and be able to compete? Yes, there are some industries where some kind of monopoly still exists and it may have to exist. Because they are sensitive—defence and so on. But even there, the ancillary industry is getting privatised. Lots of young men are coming and helping in that industry. Lots of things which we cannot do. There is a list, that list is at the moment only for the public sector.

There are other sectors which are thrown open where the public sector will not go because they don't find it profitable. You have hotel chains. One hotel may lose, another may gain profits. So, the private sector flourishes. But if you have only two hotels, how can you make it run on profitable lines? It may lose and then what is the use of blaming the public sector that—it should not run hotels. If they want to have one captive hotel for their official use, that is a different matter. We can see. After all it is the same persons who will have to work in the hotels also. No IAS officer goes and works as a bearer there. So what is the idea? His training is different. He has to be trained in that trade, whether it is private or public. So we come out of some areas where we think it is not necessary in the private sector, we will take over and probably make a better job of it.

So, while I am not closing the public sector, the public sector has to exist on its own steam. This has to be understood. Please tell us what the Government can do in this. Please tell us, how long or how much we can help you to make you stand on your feet. Yes, we are not for complete sustenance for all times. We just don't have the money. Look at the schools, look at the hospitals, look at the Primary Health Centres in the villages—10 miles from

Hyderabad, 10 miles from Bombay, 10 miles from Bangalore. Don't you see that there are two worlds coexisting. Two totally different worlds. Is it possible for any country to go on like this? You should help, help also in making profits yourself, plough them back into welfare activities yourself. When you are able to do all those things, probably you can also give a little to the Government. Those were the days when we had, really, so much of return expected and planned in the documents and realised. Those days don't seem to be very much there. You can help in many ways, the Government can help in many ways. Find those areas, come up with proposals. I assure you that there will be no prejudice against the public sector, at the same time no great favouritism, permanent favouritism in favour of the public sector that is not going to work any way. It will be neither good for us, nor good for the Government, nor good for you.

So, you have all come here. You are running huge industries, undertakings and enterprises. So, who else could tell us what to do except you. So, I depend on you. I request you to give deep thought to all these matters. Be practical. Don't go into theories. We have had enough of them. You have a situation here, a new situation, not completely new but at least vastly newer than before. Go into it. Think from the base and start, and one thing I would like you to do is—please enlist the cooperation of the people in general. You can never prosper without involving the people in some way or the other that depends on the industry. We have seen some private industries. They started from scratch. They did not know where to go. They first caught hold of the local people. They got the cooperation of the local people. Where they did not get it they could not get even the land. Even the Government wanted to do it, it went on to High Court, Supreme Court, it is still going on between the courts. Those industries have not started. So the cooperation of the people is of basic importance.

Government cannot, really, give you everything by fiat. Today the people are a little different from what they were—say 20 years

ago or 25 years ago. So you have to involve them, you have to befriend them. Once you do that, then of course, half of your job is done because they will do many things for you which you can't even imagine. The kind of power the people have got these days is enormous. If it is in your favour, you will have all the benefits out of that. If it is not in your favour, then at every step, you will have a hurdle to cross. You will not find even running of an industry worthwhile. That's why please befriend them. Please involve them. Please take all help from them in the furtherance of industrialisation. Not individually, individually no one can help everybody. If, 'A' wants it and you give it, 'B' also will want it. He will want a little more and then you cannot do that. You will not cope with that kind of situation. There is a public spirit there. People want industry. They are running after you because they want the industry in that area, in that Taluka, in that Mandal, whatever it is. So, that is the kind of thing, the patriotic fervour or the welfare of the people which is inherent in the people and the leaders has to be really addressed, not the individual profit or the benefit.

So, there are things which perhaps need to be kept in view constantly when you are remoulding or recasting your approach to industrialisation, to the public sector and we are quite sure that we have got enough innovative capabilities in this country to take stock of the changed situation and adapt to the new circumstances. Within no time, the Indian mind is able to do that. The kind of interpretation that we have achieved right from the ancient times to today, is that without changing the text, we change the interpretation, change everything. This is what has happened in all our *Shastras*. The original is the same and then you go on with multiple interpretations and change it completely. It is nothing new for us. I am sure you will be able to do it. Please address these problems, the basic problems that we have to sort out before the new era of a competitive public sector, capable of doing the same as the private sector, any other sector and India again is on

the march with a different kind of momentum on the road to progress.

Affordable Technology —Need of the Hour

I AM INDEED very happy to be associated with this simple but very effective and inspiring function where excellence is being recognised. Leave alone the award, leave alone the trophy, these are mere symptoms of recognition. But what is important is that today the Bhilai Steel Plant is recognised as the most efficient and the best in the country, and that is the real reward of the efforts that you have made. Personally speaking, I have very good memories of my visit to Bhilai in the fifties when your plant was hardly 3 or 4 years old. When I came there, half of the engineers were still from the Soviet Union.

Bhilai also has a great significance as the Plant which signifies the country's spirit of self-reliance because before that, we were told by our foreign friends, particularly in the West, that India does not need a steel plant. They asked us—and I was already a member of my Legislature at that time – “Why do you need a steel plant? We will give you as much steel as you like. Why do you need a fertilizer plant? We will give you as much fertilizer as you like.” So, that was the philosophy that was being taught. Panditji was absolutely furious at this philosophy and he said where is the other

Speech on the occasion of awarding PM's Trophy to the Bhilai Steel Plant for efficiency, New Delhi, 1 August 1994

country which can feed a country of India's size, which can supply things to India which will meet all its requirements in all respects? We do not see any other country like this. India is like an elephant. It has to stand on its own feet. Once it collapses, even if another elephant is brought, it would not be able to lift this elephant. So, the whole philosophy of self-reliance was reflected in the Bhilai Steel Plant and in the Sindri Fertilizer Factory.

We did not know where Bhilai was until I visited Bhilai, because we had a meeting of the All India Congress Committee at Raipur and we came there. We were told that Bhilai was very close and all the AICC members at that time were taken there. I remained back as I did not want to go just for one hour and have a conducted tour. I came across one engineer from Andhra Pradesh whom I happened to know. He said, 'let these people go and you stay back and we will show you around.' We took 2 or 3 hours and everywhere I found Russian engineers giving instructions and this was evident wherever I went. At that time, it was only in a formative stage. I could see something coming up as a symbol of India's self-reliance. I saw the Plant coming up there and we were very proud of it. Later on, others came and then they talked about giving everything to India from their shelves. Other plants then came about, and this is how the philosophy of India's self-reliance was slowly taking shape. All those who were trying to say that India does not need all these things, were convinced gradually. That is the significance of the Plant.

Another point which was noteworthy about Bhilai was that as far as I remember, no newspaper ever reported that Bhilai Steel Plant has become sick. About other plants we all hear about sickness. This plant may have made profits or less profits but this plant, as far as my memory goes, has not entered that area of sickness which is the bane of most of our industries today. So, there is something here which exudes a sense of pioneership, the enthusiasm of pioneership being the first in India and now you are the first in efficiency also. That makes me very proud of you.

When I went to Vishakhapatnam, I thought of it. We have so many plants here and every plant manager tells us that his plant is the best. How can I know as to which is the best? So, I said, "Look I do not know whether you are the best or not. But I do want to know who is the best." It was in that mood that I announced that let us have a trophy for the best plant. It is good and I am sure you will be enthused by it. We have a lot more to do and bring it to international standards.

I understand from friends in the steel industry that the state of obsolescence in steel is very fast. What is the state of the art today will not be so after 3-4-5 years and the whole thing changes. It is very difficult to keep up with that. What is the state of the art today, whether this is true or not, your engineers should tell us, but whatever it is, to escape from obsolescence and the avoidance of obsolescence is going to be the greatest factor in the industrialisation of India. It is here that we have to understand the real obsolescence on the one hand and then try to get the latest model on the other. We know of cars. There is no real obsolescence. If the horn is on the right side, it is one model and if the horn is on the left side, it is another model. That is not the kind of modernisation we want. We want a frog-leap to the next. Do not go into all these new fungal ideas of having the latest because after five years you will have to spend money to change to the stage which becomes still the latest at that time. We cannot afford to go on spending money for a change over every six months or every year. But if there is a process which makes you obsolete or which gives better profits, then by all means, go and jump to that place and wait for the next jump but do not start doing it year by year or six months by six months because you do not have that much money. I have thought a good deal of this obsolescence and what is meant by the latest. You must know that latest means the latest process, the latest process which is supported by scientific evidence as applied to a particular industry. Not in the laboratory alone, because once you start applying it to the industry, there are so many things which

need to be taken into account. Parameters are entirely different. So, this is something which perhaps needs to be understood by the industry, by the entrepreneurs. Probably it may be a good idea if a committee of experts or a commission or something like that could go into what really is meant by 'obsolescence' and in a country like India which does not have too much money, how this obsolescence is going to affect us and how we can go to the next process which is the real breakthrough in technology, and not a breakthrough of peripheral change.

One has to make a very clear distinction in what is understood by the managers, by the proprietors and by the industry as such and whether you have any need for it. After all, any technology will work only when it is affordable. If the country cannot afford it, then it becomes an increased burden of debt on the country and if it goes on like this for 20 years, then in spite of your latest factories, you will be an indebted country and you will lose your independence. That is why these exercises are extremely important in the case of a country like India which also wants to keep its independence intact. We do not want to barter our independence for the sake of being modern, by being told that we are modern. No. We do want it but we must have the optimum that is needed for a country in which case you may have to make some sacrifices.

Have we come to a robotic age in India? I don't think so. You may have these robots in one or two areas which are hazardous and where human life may be endangered and there you can certainly use the robots but I don't think robotisation is going to help India where employment is the real need today. You talk of high buildings and processes of manufacture but if a country with hungry millions still remains hungry, we have to think of different kinds of parameters where we have a model of a developing country. A computer here has to be totally different than a computer in Germany or France or England or America where the wage bill is more on robotics and more on other processes than on human

beings. Therefore, what Gandhiji said maybe 60 or 70 or 80 years ago, not exactly in those terms but in the most modern terms, is still true today. These are the considerations which are still valid and our industry has to take note of these things.

Whenever a new manufacturing or any other technology is talked about, the first thing we have to go into is, can we afford it? Can we reach a break-even stage in 5 or 10 years? If we cannot, why don't we wait for some time for something better which may be forthcoming. So, you have to be futuristic and not think of what is available in the next country should be immediately imported by us. Imported kind of thing has its own limitations so far as you are concerned but if you have the innovations, then you can get anything you need. Innovate and make it yourself and I don't see why we should import the things. We have to think from the point of view of a developing country where you have so much scope to export and it should be possible for us to make these exports. Presently, our exports have gone up to 22 per cent. There is enormous scope for us to export if people in those countries know that our conditions are same as other countries. We have countries in Africa, for instance. Some Heads of state from those countries visited India and they told us that they were surprised that things were available here for such a less price whereas they were spending for the same items ten times the price in buying these from other countries. There is still the old days type of empire and that empire is still operating in a different way. They find India as a good dumping ground where they can have for the same price ten things instead of one. Look at the immense possibilities of India as a developed country. It is a developed country among the developing countries. We are developed among the developing countries. So, look at the opportunities; look at the vast scope that you can realise. These are the things which our industry as a public sector or a private sector will have to understand. I am sure that private sector is already aware of it. Some of our steel kings are operating not in India but in other countries; I know them. They come and tell

me how they are in great demand and how people in those countries respect them and honour them whereas here they are hardly known.

There is so much scope and I would like all of you to get the kind of enthusiasm, that is needed to keep yourself at number one position.

Private Investment in Power Sector

I AM GLAD to have got an opportunity to start this big power plant within the vicinity of Vishakhapatnam. My thanks to all of you and to those who have been building this. I will relate you the significance of this plant in a few words. Shri Vijayabhaskara Reddy told that some of our own people from abroad and some outsiders are jointly investing here to the tune of Rs. 4,000 crore. This is not a small one. It is a very big industry. In case these people were not to part with these four thousand crores of rupees, we will have to provide this sum. I have told you this thing time and again. I have told you repeatedly what was the private sector and what was its utility to us. I have been telling you for the last three years. If I were to give these 4,000 crores, I had to collect it from you. Today, I could avoid it. You too would avoid it. For the last 47 years all of us have been investing money into these big projects, power projects, steel factories and other factories which would swallow thousands of crores. At present we do not have any money.

In 1991, that is three years ago, they have emptied out the treasury. When it was passed into my hands, I was penniless. When

Translation of speech in Telugu while laying the foundation of 1000 MW Thermal Power Station at Palavalasa, Vishakhapatnam, 29 August 1994

my Government came into power, our condition had been miserable. In those conditions none was prepared to invest money. For that end, we had to work incessantly for two to three years. I hope, you do know the white people you have been seeing here. Many of you might not have known (them). Many of these people who have been in this tent are from England. Their fathers and grand fathers, who had come here ruled over our country for 150 years and plundered us. Now they have come to invest here. When I had gone there, I told their Prime Minister, Mr John Major. Now he had sent a message to us—that they had plundered us for 150 years and asked what he could do in return. Then he told me that he was ready to do whatever I asked for. Our relations are not those of between the ruler and the ruled; our present relation has been an amicable one. You and I—both of us could unitedly do as much as required for the development of India. Consequently a giant factory that would cost about 4,000 crore of rupees is ready to come up here.

If they bring rupees 4,000 crore, I could spend the same amount of surplus money on people, on schools, on women and on our children. So far we don't have money to spend on them. We have taken up some activities on a small scale. We have been undertaking these programmes for the last 40 years, that is even from the days of Nehruji. But this has not been sufficient for anyone anywhere. Due to the increasing population, it has not been possible to provide the amenities to all the people. The rural conditions also have not been unknown to you. The reason being that the absence of electricity, big roads, big factories and fertilizer factories won't go well. We have had to build all those things and we had no other go. No one from abroad was prepared to give loans. When asked they questioned where was the necessity for you to build steel factories when we ourselves had been prepared to supply steel. Nehru told them that we would go bankrupt in case we did not have our own factories and our own technology (to rely upon) and in case we had to buy everything from you. He was a great man.

He had sown this seed. The industries which he built up have run efficiently. Even now they have been running well.

But at present our needs have increased to a great extent. The needs of the people have increased. The needs of industries have increased. So we have decided to take at least half of the power required from the private sector in this Five Year Plan.

You might have heard the name of Hindujas. I will tell you who he is. His father and grandfather hailed from this country. Sometime back they migrated to England. Many people from here have migrated to Mauritius, Burma and Singapore. Many of our Indians have migrated to foreign countries. They (Hindujas) did business there and earned worldwide reputation. Because these people have earned their money in this country they thought that it was their duty to invest some of it here. They have decided to invest at least part of the money which their grandfathers had earned here. These people—the Britishers and our own people—have been building up this factory. We need many more of its kind.

So far we have taken nearly 15,000 megawatts from the private sector. Till now we have given clearance and produced nearly 5,000 megawatts. We need at least 15 to 20 thousand megawatts within the next two years. Those who used to be sceptical earlier are now prepared to come. Previously they used to have many pretexts. They used to ask—“Is your Government well? Does it have majority? How can you run it *sans* majority? What shall we do in case your Government collapses?” All these gentlemen used to express endless doubts. Now nobody is expressing these doubts. They are all making a line to provide investment. Consequently many, administrative problems have arisen. To allow entry to these, we have had to change the old rules and regulations to an extent. We have been doing all these things for the last two years.

When I recently went to America I told them that they ought to bring what we required. What do our people need today? Firstly, they need steel factories. Secondly, power. Thirdly, oil factories. Fourthly, we need fertilizer factories on a big scale. If our agriculture has to go on smoothly, we need fertilizer factories in this country. Our farmers should be able to obtain fertilizer at reasonable prices. What is happening now? The price of fertilizers is high and we are to provide subsidies to them. The Government has been giving these subsidies. Who is paying for these subsidies? The subsidies which we have been providing to the farmers and the fertilizer factories need to be collected from you. So what could we do ultimately? We have been imposing taxes on the poor and collecting the same from them and have been giving it to some others. Telling all this is unnecessary. You come here and start factories. Let you and our people invest jointly. There are millionaires even here. In the past they were non-existent. Now we could see some of them.

The more the industries put up by all these people for the welfare of all, the more the job opportunities would arise. We do have many engineers, doctors and other highly educated people. Due to unemployment they have gone to other countries and are going through many sufferings. Wherever I have gone I have seen that all these people are prepared to come back. So I think that auspicious days have come for our country. The people who have migrated so far have been returning (now) and are telling us that they are prepared to invest any amount of money for the sake of prosperity and development of the country. The doctors are prepared to come back. The engineers are prepared to come back. The scientists are prepared to come back.

Today India is coming up. Among the backward countries, India is coming up. We have plenty of resources at our disposal. Just now Hinduja whispered that Andhra Pradesh was looking like a gold mine. I said that (the epithet) gold mine was okay but to

bring our gold or gas or oil, money was required. He told that he would look after everything. Well, he began. I'll see what he will do tomorrow. I am ready to test him hard—how much work he does for Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. Being the Prime Minister of the country, it is my responsibility to look after the welfare of all the States and we are prepared to open doors wherever he enters. Because, he can't take away this factory back. The Britishers took money but left the railways and the roads. All these things they have given us are here. They did not carry away these things back. They are saying that they want to build a hospital here. Even that would remain with us. All the activities and all the industries that they have undertaken will remain with us.

Now and then you are listening to allegations made by the newspapers and in the speeches of the politicians that some outsiders would come and take away everything. Who are these multinationals? Hindujas are also part of these multinationals. Even our own people were in these multinationals. When all these people are prepared to invest here what is the reason for their coming here from other countries? Not just for the sake of profit. Because they have love for us and they also find profits here. No one comes here for the sake of charity. He looks after his own profits but he also gives profits and amenities for us. There is no injustice in seeking profits for oneself. No one comes here to start an industry to end up in bankruptcy. Through investing here, one gives jobs to our children, our engineers and our experts and then seeks one's profits. So we also do need investment which comes through these methods. We need these investments on a large scale. The possibility is also there.

Today I am welcoming the power plant coming up here. I am congratulating all of you. I tell you that we need many industries of this kind. Today it would be mutually beneficial to our people, the non-resident Indians, foreigners and to multinationals who want

to take our country forward. I am congratulating these people for giving us an opportunity to implement this new method and a new programme. There has been a scarcity of electricity in the State and in the country. Nobody would be prepared to go to those States where boards have not been functioning properly, efficiently, profitably. They are afraid that their expenditure would go waste if they go there. The reason being that our boards have to supply electricity produced by these people. If our board functions efficiently it would be profitable for all of us. They have been hesitating to go wherever there has not been efficient functioning of the board. So I am requesting even the consumers to cooperate to a lot in this regard. They have to pay their bills properly and should not be greedy to resort to pilfer electricity. It has been happening at many places. Industrialists also do not pay their bills. They also pilfer electricity. Due to all these reasons our boards have been suffering losses. I am glad to hear that in Andhra Pradesh it is working well.

If we don't work cautiously, outsiders who have come today will go away tomorrow. So we have to attend to all these things. In addition to getting them into the country we have to plug our loopholes internally and in the sphere of administration. We have to see that both outsiders and ourselves earn profits. I appeal that this responsibility rests on the shoulders of one and all. I take leave of you expressing my thanks for giving me this opportunity (of laying the foundation-stone). I once again welcome all those who have come from outside. I have been pleading for a moratorium on all agitations for the next three to four years. Today is an auspicious day for all of us. I am feeling elated for this power factory is coming into existence on the birthday of Lord Krishna.

No Shortage of Funds for Rural Development

I THANK YOU for the warm welcome. I express my gratitude on my own behalf and on behalf of the Government of India to all of you. It was three years and three months ago that we faced darkness when our leader, Shri Rajiv Gandhi, was assassinated. We have now emerged into light after overcoming many difficulties. We strove for three years to bring this country into a bright situation and finally we succeeded. We will make progress in future too. The world may face many changes but this country is marching ahead with your blessings and your enthusiasm. With the strength you have given us, this land is always emerging fearless no matter what grave crisis we encounter.

I am here to tell you about it. You are aware of the vast changes that have occurred in the world in the past four or five years. Many countries have been divided and gone to bits. In many places you will find only quarrels and internal disputes. Several countries are in a state of panic. The powerful Soviet Union has disappeared. It has now been divided into some fifteen or sixteen countries. The maps of a number of countries have been altered. Many a land is steeped in blood after the bloody disputes they underwent in which man killed man. In the process of this bloodbath many people migrated to other countries leaving behind their hearths and homes. There, they are facing many difficulties, shortage of food and water and lack of medicines and are leading a life of migrants.

Many people in the world began to ask whether India also would face such a situation? Would India also be divided after Rajiv Gandhi's death? Would this country be divided into small

parts after Rajiv Gandhi's disappearance? Oh! would the feeling for the unity of the nation be strengthened? There were fears about the unity of India being maintained intact. All diplomats here sent reports to their respective countries that India would be broken up in small parts.

No country can now entertain any doubts about India nor throw any challenge to us. We can give a stunning reply to anyone who has any evil intentions about our country. I just wanted to draw your attention towards it. Nobody dare to question our stability and raise doubts about our economic position. You have gathered here in large numbers. So I would like to bring to your notice an important matter. We have to think deeply about the conditions we may face in future. Our relationship is, indeed, close. Shri Rajasekhar Reddy must have told you how I was invited to contest for the Lok Sabha from this area after I became Prime Minister. Shri Rajasekhar Reddy was a principal figure among the friends who extended an invitation to me to stand from this constituency. So, I stood from Nandyal, in your neighbourhood, and won.

From that time, the problems facing Cuddapah were brought to my notice by the member from this area. Whatever I could do in my capacity as one from a neighbouring constituency, I have tried to do for your area. This district is backward and the region is backward. It has the problems of scarcity, and I am aware of it. We have to try and solve the problem in a satisfactory manner. If we just undertake some works to remove scarcity conditions and then forget about it after spending some money the problem would not be solved. So, the Government of India has been preparing big plans in an effort to solve the scarcity conditions in the affected areas. The district of Cuddapah will also benefit thereby.

Shri Rajasekhar Reddy drew my attention on behalf of the farmers to the fact that there is no satisfactory insurance scheme for crops. Everyone knows about it and it is not a good thing that such

a scheme is not in force. The loans taken by the farmer from banks are waived (during scarcity conditions) but there is nothing to protect them against the failure of the crops. Ever since I assumed the office of Prime Minister we have been trying to do something about it. The effort actually began in Rajiv Gandhi's time. I would like to tell you that now we are determined to enforce the scheme. A new scheme for crop insurance is being prepared. This is not merely a matter for waiving bank loans but it also provides for crop insurance. Thus the insurance officer tries to pay you the full amount equivalent to the value of the crop lost. It is our hope that this scheme would be in full application within a year.

In 1991 when I assumed the office of Prime Minister the country was in a terrible predicament. We had little foreign exchange. We had incurred debts and our gold had been pawned. Think about the effort we had to put in to extricate the country from the mess it was in. There is no need to repeat all that because you are aware of the conditions in which we found ourselves then.

We have taken big strides and acquired a huge amount of foreign exchange. We have now the capacity of importing anything that we need and there is now no difficulty in making such imports. Our own production is also going up by 20 per cent every year. Thereby there are good prospects of earning more foreign exchange. What we sell abroad fetches us foreign exchange. We must industrialise in a big way. We have to establish these industries so that our young men and women can get jobs and earn a livelihood for themselves.

The public sector undertakings set up earlier were not making profits and the government had to make good their losses. This created many problems for us as most of the undertakings except some were running at a loss. It thus became necessary for us to strengthen the private sector so that profits could be ensured. For the past three years we have made many efforts to encourage the private

sector and induce foreign capital to come in. Some capital from abroad has been coming in the past two years.

You have to work hard for the success of the development schemes. I introduced a new programme for the young men and women last year. Under it any young person, whether he has any money or not, and if wants to start a factory or run a shop and enter trade he can draw Rs. one lakh from the banks. Thousands of young persons thus received bank loans. There is provision under the scheme for training of the youth in the trade or business that they are keen to enter. For the training a subsidy of Rs. 7,500 is given. The balance of the amount is recovered in small instalments and the recovery is effected only when the person starts earning.

We thus launched many such schemes in the past year. Some 40,000 people took advantage of this scheme, although this figure of 40,000 is small for a big country like ours. But this programme will go on as we have the necessary funds for it. We launched a specific scheme for women last year and I made an announcement about it. Any woman in the villages can open an account in any post office for Rs. 300 in her name. After a year the amount becomes Rs. 375 and it is returned after that period. You can call it an interest of Rs. 75 on an amount of Rs. 300 in a year or a gain. The women of Andhra Pradesh have participated in this scheme in a big way and I would like to congratulate all of you. I am particularly happy that our sisters in the villages, who constitute half of our population, have lent their support to the success of the scheme.

Now let us talk of Panchayati Raj. In the Panchayats and Panchayat Samitis there would be one-third women representatives. There would be representation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes also. Programmes for women will move forward in an intense manner through the instrumentality of these Panchayats and I earnestly hope so. We have allocated large funds for the Panchayats to spend on rural development. The amount is Rs. 30,000 crore as

against Rs.7,000 crore allocated in the Seventh Plan. We have stepped up the allocation for rural development steeply from Rs.7,000 crore to 30,000 crore straightaway. These schemes for rural development are being implemented in every district so that the poor people in those areas could reap some benefit out of them. The allocations work out to a minimum of Rs.40 to 50 crore per district. This amount comes from the Government of India and you can take it as funds placed at your disposal. You can take it as funds placed at your disposal. You can take it as funds provided to you by the Planning Commission of the Centre.

The amount of Rs.30,000 crore would be spent in the next two or three years. In the next Plan, the Ninth Five Year Plan, we would sanction Rs.60,000 crore for rural development. Then we would try to place at the disposal of each district Rs.60 to 100 crore instead of Rs.40 crore. The amount would be spent through the village Panchayats, through the elected bodies, through the cooperative societies, through the people and the brothers and sisters living in the villages. The programmes would be run according to their wishes and they can decide how they benefit by them and how the various programmes accord with their desires.

I wish to assert that there would henceforth be no shortage of funds for rural schemes. The main reason for that happy state is that large foreign funds flow into the private sector projects. Only yesterday, I laid the foundation for a Rs.4,000 crore major power project in Vishakhapatnam for which you need not spend even Rs. ten. The State government only gave the required land. We supply water and if need be, we can provide other assistance but there would be no need to give financial assistance. The entire amount to be spent on this power project is coming from abroad. Many people from India who went abroad 100 years ago or 50 years ago, and made it big in business and industry, in the profession of doctors, or in trade, and made a fortune, are now ready to invest their money in factories in India out of patriotic motives. Such are the

people involved in this power project. Some people came from Britain and set up their companies in India.

We thus get the funds from abroad for these projects and the money we collect from the people of India through taxes is being diverted to the villages. We are able to complete these big projects with the funds coming from abroad and with the money provided by others. We are now in a position where we can thus assert with confidence that there would be no shortage of funds for the villages.

There is today a difference between the development of the cities and the villages, between Hyderabad and a village and between Cuddapah and a village. This is a big injustice that this apparent distinction exists. We should do everything possible to abolish this difference and root it out completely. With that goal in view, steps should be taken to bridge the gap. There should be good schools, good hospitals and roads. So we have taken up the rural development schemes with a view to changing the face of our villages and provide them with the facilities that exist in the cities.

The unemployment problem in the villages should be tackled. For at least three months in a year, people are unemployed in agriculture. Even if there is no drought and there is normal rainfall and normal farming operations are being conducted, there is unemployment for 100 days, at least three months when everything comes to a halt. To enable such people to find some work in their villages and to prevent them from migrating to the cities in search of work every Panchayat is handling a scheme. We spent nearly six hundred crores on this programme last year and this year too some 800 crores are being spent. The scheme is being implemented in each village. The government is preparing schemes to provide employment to these people if even a few of them come forward and ask for work. The work is to be provided in development programmes connected with that village, be it a canal or a pond, a school building or any other gainful work.

Along with these schemes we are also introducing a new system to help our children. You must have seen on the TV or heard on the radio when I announced it in my Fifteenth August speech. We find that many of our children, who are below 12 or 14 years of age, are working in factories. Some are working in carpet making units, and some are employed in other factories and after their health is impaired beyond repair after they have completed hardly 14 years of age they become delinquents. This is not proper and we should not allow this to happen. We had even written it down in our Constitution more than 40 years ago that we should not let the children work in factories.

But even now the system of child labour persists and the reason for that is the poverty of the people who do not have any income and, therefore, they have to put their children in jobs to help the family. In the whole country, if you take a proper count, some 20 to 25 lakh children are thus employed. We have decided to provide mid-day meals to the children who attend school.

We are no longer begging for foodgrains from abroad. Some 20 or 25 years ago, during the time of Indiraji's first term as Prime Minister, we were facing a drought in our country. At that time when we tried to buy foodgrains from other countries they taunted us, whether they sold the grains or not. They asked us why we did not think about our increasing population and why we were not doing enough to step up our food production. They told us why we were not increasing our output and why we were begging for food abroad. We had to suffer such taunts. Indira Gandhi was angered and she felt strongly about the self-respect of the nation. In three or four years after that our farmers brought us the Green Revolution. This was accomplished in three or four years and all the schemes for raising food output were implemented.

Indira Gandhi achieved this with the help of our farmers. Thanks to that Green Revolution, our country has not faced any

shortage of food till today. We could carry on even if it did not rain well for a year or two or three years. Now there is good rainfall in all our States and now we have 35 million tonnes of surplus foodgrains. We find it difficult to store it and preserve it. In another fifteen days there would be a new crop in Punjab, Haryana and this State also. We have to store the rice crop in the open because we have a big stock of foodgrains.

I wish to tell you that we are ready to provide about 4 to 5 million tonnes of foodgrains at concessional rates for the children's Mid-day Meal Scheme or for supply of nutritious food to them in a big way throughout the country. I told the same thing to some women who had come to see me in Vijayawada yesterday and they accepted my advice. I would say the same thing to our sisters here that some effort should be made for giving nutritious food to the children. I wish to tell you that we have a big programme for the whole country to render assistance in the children's nutritious food scheme.

For successful operation of such programmes we need peaceful conditions in the country. We have to strengthen peace and security in the country. People should lend a helping hand in the development and progress of the country. There should be no competition in putting obstacles in the way of programmes being implemented. Rather there should be competition in carrying forward the development process. I would be happy if this sentiment of competition for progress grows among you.

That spirit of competition in development should permeate to the village level, a Sarpanch must think of taking his village forward, ahead of other villages. Without such competitive spirit one cannot make progress, not merely by talking about it. You must preserve peace and lead a peaceful life. Establish peace in the country and warn your leaders that you do not want their quarrels to spread among you. You should tell them that you are interested in

development and progress, you would live in peace and not quarrels. If you all come together and say this in a fullthroated manner these disputes and quarrels will come to an end. If in the next four years you preserve peace nobody can intimidate our country.

Our country will then advance towards development. Our countrymen and women go abroad and return with laurels, whether they are engineers, scientists or doctors. Many of them want to return and they want to invest here the money they have made in foreign countries. New hospitals are being built, new projects are being launched. We pledge that we are ready to bring new techniques into India, techniques which we did not have here before. If we do not welcome the wealth that is coming in from abroad the country will go down.

The coming four or five years will be a testing time for us. Forget differences, if any, still exist among you. Extend your cooperation to the Government in maintaining the unity and integrity of the nation. I tell you all this because I am one of you and it is my duty to tell you what is good for you. I am saying this for the progress of a united India, not for myself. If I can do something good as your representative I will also earn a good name. I would win a place for myself as one who went out from here and achieved a prestigious position. Your cooperation in this task will be an asset.

Revamping the Small-scale Sector

IT IS A matter of great honour and privilege for me to welcome our respected Rashtrapati on this happy occasion when we are according recognition to the excellent entrepreneurs and presenting them with national awards. These awards are only symbolic in nature but have an encouraging demonstrative effect on the young entrepreneurs of the country. The scheme of national awards to outstanding small-scale entrepreneurs was introduced in the year 1983 to encourage primarily first generation entrepreneurs. In 1986 the scheme was expanded to cover small-scale enterprises manufacturing quality products. I am glad to mention that we have further expanded the scheme to include, exclusive awards for women entrepreneurs and Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe entrepreneurs since 1993.

You are aware of the foresight and wisdom of our national leaders, especially late Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who assigned to the small-scale sector a key role in the industrial development of this country. It was visualised by Panditji as this sector has special capabilities in fostering industrial growth due to its inherent strength of high employment generation with low capital investment. This has been well established by the results achieved so far in the country. It will not be out of context to mention that today this sector produces more than 7,500 products and accounts for about 40 per cent of the industrial output. The requirement of 1993-94 generated by this sector has been estimated at about 139.38 lakhs. This sector has not only made significant contribution to the economy as a whole but specifically in the development of industrially backward area. You know that after the new policy was introduced in 1991 we had lot of difficulties in going ahead, the cynicism that we found among the people who ought to know better was really appalling. We

were told in Parliament and outside that the small-scale industry is going to be simply swallowed by our policy of opening up.

It is a matter of pride, a matter of great satisfaction that all these prophets of doom have been proved thoroughly wrong, and today small-scale industries' sector in India is one of the success stories, and this has been acknowledged not only in this country but in other countries also. Wherever I have gone, I have heard good words about small-scale sector. That, of course, should not make us complacent because I have seen that all sectors of industry are galloping in getting new technology. The small-scale is no exception. There is a particular stamp about the small-scale. It doesn't take much money, at the same time, its productivity, if properly fostered, can go up and bring larger dividend, not only to the people involved in it but to the country as a whole. We can see a progressive increase in the exports and, therefore, the progressive prosperity among those workers, artisans and organisers who are engaged in this field.

This is as it should be because India always had a great name in small-scale industries and this had never been otherwise except when we were under imperial rule. There was then a conscious effort, a deliberate effort to see that the industries' sector, the small-scale industries' sector, the village industries' sector, which had been there for hundreds and thousands of years, was somehow scuttled, somehow emasculated. This was done deliberately as a result of which our industries did suffer, but since independence, the steady growth of the industry has been going on. We have now also revamped the Khadi and Village Industries Commission. Now there are more devoted people and I am looking forward to a time when the Commission will go back to its glorious days of 25-30 years ago when highly placed leaders were heading that Commission. I have been myself a worker, I am still a worker in the Khadi field and I know how that particular area has seen ups and downs.

Now, I think it's on a steady course. Our entrepreneurs particularly the younger set have shown a great enterprise, to create

originality. I would like them to look around in other countries for better technology and this is the time when you can get the better technology unlike what we were told last year or an year before last that this technology is going to simply eat away all the small-scale sector. Now, technology is able to come to your aid. It's not going to eat you up. Please look around, we will help you. I am sure, other countries where this technology of the small-scale industry is in an advanced stage, will certainly help you. I don't want Indian industries, Indian products to remain behind in quality. Quality is the name of the game these days. So, I would request all the awardees and others to take full advantage of the possibilities which have opened up as a result of the new policy.

Harnessing Non-Conventional Energy Sources

I AM, INDEED, very happy to be associated with this meeting and I also congratulate the winners of the shields for their performance in different areas of non-conventional energy. This Ministry, as you are aware was established as a separate Ministry recently. During the last two years you can see the enormous improvement in the performance of the Ministry when compared to the time when all the activity under the Ministry of Power was perhaps languishing. I am very happy that what I had thought was the potential of this activity, has come true to some extent, although I must say that there is much more to be done. The basic factor in regard to power needs to be remembered, whatever is our programme on the conventional side in the energy field, whatever we are doing anywhere in the world is to deplete the planet of the resources that are ultimately finite and

unless at some point of time we are able to catch up with the exhaustion of these resources, I am afraid, the mankind is going to suffer. It is very easy to say so, but equally difficult, perhaps much more difficult to get this actually implemented. So we are making a good start in the programme of non-conventional energy sources. These sources are really not so non-conventional because the sun is not non-conventional, these are known to us for thousands of years. So in a way when you call it non-conventional, you are not describing it properly, you might say these are ancient sources of energy.

The conventional sources that have taken the lion's share of our programme, government's programmes, everywhere in the world are the finite resources and when you are able to foresee the end of finite resources—complete depletion of the planet of its finite resources—evidently you have to think of something else and that will have to be thought of several centuries earlier, so that at the last moment you are not taken by surprise. Many countries have been thinking about it. They have mounted good programmes but I must say that there are limitations to the technology. The technology limitation is mostly in the field of making it economically viable and that struggle also is going on. The programmes are becoming more and more viable or maybe less and less unviable as we go along and the time is not far off I hope, when there will be a real breakthrough in beating this line of viability and making some of the sources at least viable. Now this is the struggle in which we are engaged at the moment.

I am glad that some sizeable results in the generation of power have now become possible. Until now it was only demonstrative in all the industrial exhibitions, there used to be a non-conventional energy stall. You went there and you were shown the same thing again and again every year. I think that situation has changed now. In fact about three/four years back, when I had been to one such exhibition, I asked them whether there was anything new which they

had not shown the previous years and the answer was no. It was just a repetition. So it struck me that we are not doing any progress which needs to be done. Since this has become a separate Ministry and I have been looking after it as far as possible, and after Krishna Kumar took over, I think some original thinking, some special efforts have been put into it. We are in a position where we can show that we are not really behind anyone in this programme. It's not merely for generating power. It is to conserve the energy of the conventional sources as far as possible and replace them by non-conventional sources which are almost inexhaustible.

So, I would like to compliment the work that has been done but again the decisions which you have arrived at, I hope, will make the Chief Ministers, the State governments more interested in this programme, because it is at the field level that these programmes have to be implemented. I would like these programmes to be stepped up as far as possible, wherever possible. In fact, the wind energy is something which we can chart out in advance. You do know how many areas are there where this is technically feasible and if we could concentrate on them and also the solar photo volt type which as of now doesn't appear to be economical but would have to become economical if the programme is to make any headway. After all wind energy can be produced only in some places, finite number of places which have been mapped out already. It's the solar energy that needs to be harnessed to the largest possible extent, not only by photo volt type cells etc, but there may be technologies to do this. I understand that there has been some new thinking on new lines about harnessing solar energy. I would like all this to be done in India because we have started laying emphasis on our R&D programmes and I hope that many of these programmes will be doing with non-conventional energy.

Now I have nothing more to add. I endorsed what has been read by the Secretary about the decisions you have arrived at and hope you will act according to these decisions because it means providing

money in the State budget and so on apart from other things. So I would like this to be taken up by all the States. There is a lot that can be done and should be done, in addition to what has been done.

So, I think, I would leave it to you to complete the task as far as possible, as quickly as possible. My compliments to all the awardees and to those who are in the field. I would say, please try to do better, you have done well. That's all I could say.

Now the Panchayats and other local bodies are also coming into existence. Therefore, I am sure if they take interest in this programme, it would have a leap forward. Whatever needs to be done in pursuance of this, of Panchayats being put in charge or getting interested in these things, needs to be done. There should be not too much of red tape, not too much of rules, regulations etc. Once you give it to their charge, then I think they will do the rest and they will take initiative wherever possible. I would like the bodies to the Rural Development Ministry also to look into this. So that there is a good coordination between the non-conventional energy and rural development. You can have these programmes properly carried out. I hope that the training etc. which has been talked about, will be available to a large number of rural artisans so that the programme doesn't languish or fall behind for want of competent people to look after the programme.

I once again thank you very much for calling me. I would be happy to visit some places where some work which is worth seeing has been done and I would like this to be shown to others also who come from outside, so that they could be encouraged to invest in this. They need more investment and if investment were to come from any quarter, I think, it should be welcomed and we should replicate these programmes as quickly as possible. So that they make an impact.

Thank you very much once again for having bestowed so much of attention to this programme and I hope this will become a good starter for a really massive programme in the years to come.

Industry to Strengthen Infrastructure

IT GIVES ME great pleasure to be present on the occasion of the platinum jubilee celebration of the ASSOCHAM. It is heartening to note that this apex chamber of commerce and industry has played a key role in promoting the development of trade and industry. It has brought forth the views of industry on the major policy issue and has worked as a bridge between the government and industry. I am extremely happy to note that you have also realised the importance of development of the social sector of the economy. The ASSOCHAM's efforts in providing drinking water for 75 villages is commendable. But this is a mere drop in the ocean as Singhaniaji said, it is small way—I would like it to be real big way—may be 750 villages. How about it, please consider. As I have mentioned to Mr Singhania and other captains of industry much remains to be done in areas such as health, women's welfare, problem of mass literacy, child care and the like. The corporate sector must assume much greater social responsibility than they have done in the past. I hope that more and more industrial houses and corporate bodies will take up such important effort.

This meeting is taking place at an appropriate time just after the third anniversary of the New Industrial Policy. The path taken by India in the economic reform process is unique. We have succeeded in making very significant changes in the whole economic environment over this three years' period and have tried to minimise the suffering in the country. We have retained positive growth rates. Balance of payment has been a heartening turnaround with foreign exchange reserves increasing to over 17 billion US dollars. Exports have shown an increase in 1993-94. The rupee has been stable. We

have also been able to stem the inflation rate. The world investment community has begun to realise the potential that India offers to the world. This suggests that India is, indeed, on the move.

However, despite all these achievements it is very clear to us that we have a long way to go before we can be confident of achieving the kind of sustained industrial and overall economic growth which is necessary for removing poverty in our own life time. The basic aim of economic policies must be to promote employment and reduce poverty. The decisive reforms introduced by us since 1991 are aimed at providing the means for the transition of this kind of high sustained growth. The wide ranging industrial deregulation has led to an impressive display of entrepreneurship by our private sector. More than 16,500 investment intentions have already been filed with us indicating an increased interest in taking up new projects. The total amount of foreign investment approved has over US 6 billion dollars in the last three years. The increase in international confidence in the Indian economy also signifies by the enthusiastic presence of foreign institutional investors in the Indian equity market. These institutions invested about 1.5 billion US dollars last year and an additional 1.5, 2.5 billion were raised by the corporate sector in the international capital market. Furthermore, the corporate sector raised nearly 25 thousand crore rupees from the primary market during 93-94. The sanctions and disbursements by the all India financial institutions also registered impressive increases.

Now that so much money has been raised by the Indian corporate sector, it is time that these resources see their way into real investment in industry. What really encourages me even more than the big investment is the small investment, the medium investment, which is coming from our very talented young engineers all over the country. Wherever I go, I find innovative works are being done, innovative ideas are coming up. I am not saying that all these hundreds of ideas are going to fructify into something viable in each

case. Maybe some of them will find that they are unviable in course of time but the fact remains that the initiative taken by our young men is something which I had never expected to this extent. It is something to be seen to be believed. It is quite heart-warming and it promises a great future in the medium industry sector in the country with small entrepreneurs starting with a very humble beginning like 1 crore, half a crore and then going on to, say 8 to 10 crores, and thereafter of course it is a matter whether they will further grow or just keep themselves at that level. It can vary from case to case but this is something which has given me a great hope and encouragement.

All these are auspicious signs for industrial investment and growth. However, it must be admitted that the growth in industrial production has only been moderate since we instituted the reform process. In fact this investment which I have just spoken about is in the last one-and-a-half years. For the first one-and-a-half years we had only promises, cross examination, lot of explaining, lot of nodding one way or the other and only the trickle started about a year and a half back. It was to be expected because a change in policy of this kind, this magnitude would not have carried conviction overnight.

I was asked all kinds of questions about my Government being stable or not stable which I was not able to describe. I couldn't say whether my Government was stable or unstable. It was for others to see whether it is stable or not stable. It is very difficult for a Prime Minister to go about defending his Government. I can defend my policy but I cannot defend my Government. This I always do in Parliament. So it was a little difficult for me to stand all these questioning. But, somehow, maybe my perseverance has brought the results and I don't find those questions being asked any more.

We can seek some comforts in the gradual recovery that has taken place during this time. However it is imperative to work

towards a much higher growth rate by Indian industry. It is only after the industrial sector leads the way that the rest of the economy will follow. Only then can we hope to see the removal of poverty in India within the stipulated time frame.

I now turn to some of the important issues that need to be addressed to give a sustained impetus to industrial growth. The key requirement is much more rapid pace of technological upgradation on a widespread basis. Much better use must be made by all of you of vast scientific and expertise that exists not only within India but also among the millions of our compatriots who are residing abroad. Greater attention to the requirements of technology will take place only if we give much more importance to our skilled labour force and to the engineers who are the backbone of our industry. I could also add in this connection that there is lot of research, lot of innovation that has been done within the laboratories in India.

When I went to Singapore, I told the Prime Minister of Singapore that literally hundreds of schemes, innovations are at the stage where they have to be turned into commercial propositions. These have been proved at the laboratory level. The CSIR gave me a long list of such ideas which could be translated into industry with the necessary back up from the industry by way of capital and turning into a technology which is viable. All of them may not prosper. But some of them are really worth our money, worth our attention. Prime Minister of Singapore said, 'yes, it always happens—there is a long gap between the laboratory and the industry.' And he promised to send a team of his research scientists and other technologists to India. They will be visiting some of our laboratories—there are quite a few of them as you know. They were started by our late Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. They are doing very good work. So if the CSIR is doing something which is good for the future of the industry, it is time that the industry itself has a little higher outlay on research and development.

This is not a slogan, this is a fact that we are becoming out of date before we become upto date. This is what is happening. So it is a kind of race which perhaps one, a developing country, can hardly win. But we have to run the race, there is no way we can be left behind and get ourselves into that vicious circle where we can never recover.

I have recently returned from an absorbing and fruitful visit to Vietnam and Singapore. I have come back impressed by the importance that a country such as Singapore has given to upgradation of skills to their entire population. I suggest that new innovative efforts be made by employers, workers organisations and the government to make available training opportunities at all levels. There is also an urgent need for Indian industry to upgrade managerial competence which is so necessary to improve industrial relations in our country. Favourites do not become necessarily good managers. So one has to be absolutely merciless in separating one's own favour from the objective conditions, namely, the skill of the person you want to favour. Otherwise he becomes a liability. This is something which is being realised increasingly. I find that there is a lot of difference between the managerial personnel of say about 15 to 20 years ago and the personnel you find these days.

Indian industry has catered to the restricted sectors of market and this has precluded the larger benefits of economies of scale from accruing. There is need for development of mass-scale production and an appropriate strategy to tap the large potential of rural market. The fruits of industrial progress must accrue on a wide spread basis in all our far flung rural areas. Basic consumption goods must become available at reasonable prices to all who demand them and special attention, therefore, must be given for production of basic consumption goods at lowest consumption levels. Extension of the industrial culture to the rural areas would happen automatically if our large industries encourage the development of ancillary industry through sourcing of their components and through sub-contracting.

In the Union Budget 1994-95 Government has extended the system of MODVAT to a large number of industrial products as part of the programme to move to a full benefit tax system. This should encourage the development of ancillary industry and sub-contracting mother units can now concentrate on the poor production activity without being unduly worried about the cascading effects of the duties. This process should also help standardisation of products and transfer of technology to the ancillary units. Development of world class economic infrastructure in sectors like power, transport and communication is considered critical for sustained industrial recovery. Government has already invited private participation in all these areas. The easy availability of infrastructure is a vital necessity for the industry to grow at a kind of growth that I have mentioned. There is undoubtedly a limit to the availability of resources with the government. It is certain that better infrastructure would come up if there is widespread participation in creating such infrastructure. I am happy that there is a much greater desire to come in the infrastructure sector today than what I found two years ago.

I feel that the private sector must play a more active role in these areas releasing government efforts and resources to concentrate on sectors such as health, education and other critical social areas. You may remember that for the first one year or a little more, the trend of investment was more towards consumer industry. It took a lot of emphasis on any part and on the part of our government representatives to impress upon intending investors that this is not our priority. Not that they are prohibited from coming into these areas, but we said very clearly that this is not Government's priority. Government's priority is elsewhere and that is in the infrastructure area.

After a year-and-a-half I find that this has been accepted by the investor community abroad. And I feel very happy about it. I thought it would be an uphill task. They would always come in only for consumer industries because we have a large population and the

middle class is a big one and we have a market. But I am glad that they have accepted the priorities of the Government. And today whatever investment is coming, it is about 80-85 per cent investment in infrastructure, and only the rest in other sectors. This is exactly what we wanted, this is exactly what has happened.

Last but not the least, investors require full support and encouragement of the state governments where they intend to set up their units. To set up any unit, it is necessary to obtain various facilities such as getting power connection or water supply, land and often fiscal relief. The rules and procedures governing the approval of these facilities are perceived to be cumbersome. With the opening up of the economy and ending license, permit raj state governments have to compete among themselves to attract investments. Some of them are doing so, there is a lot of activity in the States and Chief Ministers are visiting other countries to hawk around whatever they have to offer as facilities. And I am glad to say that this has resulted in people abroad, investors abroad knowing something more about individual States, not just the country but the individual States. They know what is available in Maharashtra, what is available in U.P., what is available in Bengal, maybe not available etc. So, this knowledge could perhaps be supplemented by our own effort to give them more and more details as would be needed by the investors. I am not sure whether this is being done to the extent necessary but ASSOCHAM and the other industrial associations could take this up. What they had done so far is quite impressive. In the first year we found that they had done better than the Government. But that is not enough. Everyone who wants to invest in India should know what is available in the States and in the Union Territories, what is available by way of policy support at the Central Government level. All these things should be very clearly stated and it should be available to the investors. I am glad that many of the State governments have been quick to realise the need for this but there are still many State governments which have yet to provide a conducive atmosphere to attract investments.

The process of reform which India has initiated is irreversible and the response so far is quite enthusiastic. I would like to sound a note of caution as any reform or transition process will have different impact on different sections of our people. It is our endeavour to make the adjustment process least painful and carry on the reforms with a human face. Nurturing a labour market which provides greater mobility and more opportunity is to effectively deal with shifts in industrial structure and internationalisation with minimum dislocations and hardships is an area of challenge for our policy makers. Here also I seek the cooperation of all concerned, managements and workers organisations to come together in such a way that the burdens of restructuring are borne much more by those who can afford it and much less by those who cannot. One very important example is of the NTC. I am glad to tell you that the textile mills in the NTC have been struggling with this problem. They had a tripartite discussion going on, I don't know how many months, something or the other went wrong at each stage. But now they have been able to cross all the hurdles. And you will see that the 122 textile mills under the NTC will all be modernised within the next one or two years. This is something for which, those who have been responsible including the labour unions, the managements and perhaps the policy makers have to be complimented. I got this news only yesterday. I am sharing it with you.

The purpose of our assembling here today is to have a free and fair discussion on issues of mutual interest and benefit by each others views. In today's changed context the government, entrepreneurs, and workers are equal partners in progress. We should, therefore, work in tandem to sort out problems and remove impediments so that the economy can surge ahead for the good of all. And I am sure that at the end of this meeting we will be having such useful suggestions. We want you to tell us what more can be done. We want you to tell us how this can be done. And we want you to tell us, not the least, what you are going to do about it.

Industry to Improve Productivity Standard

IT IS A pleasure for me to be here to inaugurate India's prestigious 14th India International Trade Fair, popularly known as IITF. November, traditionally, has many festivals and celebrations in our country. The IITF has established itself as one such occasion where the atmosphere is festive but business is serious. Its opening coincides with the celebration of the birth anniversary of one of the moving forces of our time, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the architect of modern India. He laid the foundation of our industrial, scientific and technological progress. Our achievement today can be traced to his policies. This fair is a tribute to him.

As we prepare for the 21st century, we have to be cognisant of the challenges in a highly competitive world, in which stringent demands have to be met by any country that seeks a place in the world economy. Over the last three years our Government has given a new thrust and direction to the economy, envisioning the challenges of the future while remaining committed to the cause of social justice and ensuring fulfilment of the basic needs of all our people.

I am happy that we have achieved a fair measure of success in this. With foreign exchange reserves reaching a level of close to between 18 and 19 billion US dollars and growing at a healthy pace, the problem of paucity of exchange reserves is now behind us. We have been witness to a scenario wherein there has been a substantial increase in direct foreign investment with investment approvals crossing US \$ 7 billion. Exports have also registered

a healthy growth as my colleague has pointed out. The Government has been able to introduce full convertibility of the rupee on the current account.

Indian industry has risen to the challenges thrown up by the liberalised policies of the Government. A new vigour has been infused into industrial activity and export performance. It is imperative that the tempo does not slacken in the coming years. An attitudinal change at the decision making levels and a more pragmatic approach towards better utilisation of our scarce resources has already taken place. But it cannot be denied that there is room for much improvement. Again, it cannot be denied that we have a long way to go.

The Government will continue to offer every possible encouragement to spur industrial activity in all sectors: public, private, joint or cooperative. At the same time, industry must take advantage of the liberalised policy of the Government and bring its productivity levels in line with international standards. The widening base of production is making competition both at the national and international levels razor sharp. Buyers are becoming increasingly conscious of quality and selective in product brands. Trade fairs play an important role in export promotion and in assessing developments in key industrial sectors in different parts of the world. They also provide the much needed crucible for testing the acceptability of new products and new technologies. I am happy to note that this fair has been playing a stellar role in launching new products in the market at home and abroad.

There are 18 countries taking part in IITF '94 at the national level, displaying a wide range of products, technologies and services from no fewer than 130 foreign firms. I am sure the foreign participants will take note of the highly conducive climate in India for investment on a big scale and the returns that these can offer. ITPO has, I understand, continued with the practice in the last few

years of delineating certain vital industrial sectors for special display while retaining the general character of the fair.

The principal theme of 'Sustainable Development' chosen this year, is of considerable relevance, worldwide and more so for developing countries. While for a developing country like India, our development objectives are of critical importance, these cannot be allowed to militate against the cause of ecology and environmental protection. Our industry must take all possible safeguards to protect our environment.

Since time immemorial Indian philosophers have advocated the cause of the environment. In our scriptures and mythological treatises, there are innumerable references to the need to protect our flora and fauna. The epic *Mahabharata* begins, for instance, with an outpouring against the wanton destruction of wild life by a hunter. The scriptures drive this point home succinctly in the lines, which mean:

“O pure Earth, may that we utilise your resources well without causing you injury or harm and disturbing any vital element in you.”

I don't think there can be any more succinct statement of ecological concerns on the part of any one than this. And these are the first words in the *Mahabharata*.

In our age, Mahatma Gandhi also cautioned against the ill effects of over-exploitation of the earth when he observed, “There is enough in the earth for man's need but not enough for his greed.”

In our onward march towards technological excellence in economic activity we must always be alert to its environmental fallout. We must have the willingness to see collaborative ventures with countries that have acquired better expertise in controlling

pollution. The issue of sustainable development and environment is just one of the many which confirms the point that in an interdependent world, equity is the best safeguard for our common future.

The Intechmart special display pertaining to the small and medium sector which I am told has become a regular feature of IITF, is also very topical. This sector plays an important role in the national economy, as an employment generator and export earner. India is also in a position to offer its expertise in setting up small and medium industrial units abroad and provide the necessary training.

The definition of sustainable development has been given by many experts all over the world, but particularly in relation to environment. I have a feeling that the definition could be expanded. Development becomes sustainable when it is compatible with environment. At the same time, this compatibility need not be confined with environment alone. There are many other things—social, environmental—that has already been covered—economic and many other factors which need to be taken into account in the peculiar circumstances of a particular country and what is sustainable in that country, placed as it is in those peculiar circumstances needs to be arrived at. And what I would say is sustainable development in relation to a particular country is that which we arrive at.

This is a complicated matter because it takes so many factors into account, while so far only environment has been taken into account. It needs to be worked out. It is a task for economists, for planners, for thinkers, for those who can keep an eye on everything at the same time and only in the light of what is possible, what is attainable and what is necessary. The gap between what is possible and what is necessary is wide. In many instances it is wide. Can you bridge that gap? Can you make it narrow and

still have the development in that sustained fashion, continue in the circumstances of a given country?

This is the kind of unknown which has to be derived from so many known factors. I hope some thinkers, some economic thinkers in India would go into this question in great detail and come out with some ideas, some rough ideas, necessary to start with, because at some point of time we have to start this thinking what is appropriate, what is sustainable, what is possible and what is necessary, and how do we bridge the gap between what is possible and what is necessary.

I take this opportunity to compliment ITPO for its innovations and improvements in trade events in India and abroad. ITPO has played the role of a catalyst and facilitator in increasing exports and generally furthering the process of integration with the global mainstream.

May I conclude by wishing the participants and business visitors, both from India and abroad, all success in their endeavours.

With these words, I take great pleasure in inaugurating the IITF '94.

Stability—a Prerequisite for Economic Reforms

IT GIVES ME great pleasure to inaugurate today the 67th Session of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry. I am happy to see that this apex Chamber is revitalising itself to play its appointed role in our economy as it modernises and grows. I see that you have launched new initiatives to help the State governments into new partnership between management and labour so that they also keep pace with the wide ranging changes that are taking place in our system. It is gratifying to see your sharpened focus on the infrastructure. I also appreciate your view on the need for the corporate sector to assume greater responsibility in human resource development and public health. Your effort in charting a new course of action is timely and appropriate. I have already instructed my Private Secretary to find out where exactly those 400 villages that Mr Bansi Dhar spoke about are near Calcutta and I will visit some of them at the earliest opportunity. I am very happy that something is being done.

You have referred to the need for the Government and industry to work together and guide the nation into the 21st century. Such a partnership between the Government and industry is essential if our country, or for that matter any country is to make progress. We have spoken a great deal about it in the past. It is heartening to find that it is gradually becoming a reality. Our joint efforts over the past three years have started yielding desirable results. For us, accelerating the rates of growth is now accepted as an urgent need, although I must add that this is an urgent need but eventually there are other needs which need to be blended with this.

Your contribution to the national effort becomes crucial. After the initial restructuring of policies and procedures, it is satisfying to find that steady growth is now taking place in the industrial sector. In the first four months of this year, the growth in the manufacturing sector was almost 9 per cent. What is most encouraging is that this growth is across the board and not confined to only one or a few sub-sectors. Even though we have a long way to go, our infrastructure industries also have shown consistent improvement over the last three years. This is encouraging. Similarly, our capital goods industry has taken up the challenge of new competition vigorously and with almost 19 per cent growth, is helping to lay the basis of sound industrial development.

Wide-ranging industrial deregulations, we undertook has evoked commendable response from our entrepreneurs. More than 18,000 investment intentions have been filed since July 1991, totalling investment of over Rs.350,000 crore with potential for direct employment for 3.4 million persons. Implementation has also started. Last year, more than Rs. 25,000 crore was raised in the primary market and a similar amount was disbursed by our key financial institutions. Taken together, this figure is almost three times the resources raised by the corporate sector on an average in the years preceding the reforms. We can therefore be sure that these projects will not suffer for want of resources.

While for overall growth, performance of the industrial sector is important, the agricultural sector continues to be the backbone of our economy. What is most gratifying is that this sector also has exhibited consistent growth, as a result of which we now have unprecedented stock of almost 30 million tonnes foodgrains. Our exports grew by 20 per cent last year. Inflation was controlled and the rate has been stable. Our foreign exchange reserves have risen and are nearing US \$ 20 billion. With such levels of food and foreign exchange reserves, the country can now look ahead with great self-assurance. All this augurs well for the future.

The recognition given last year by the world capital market to India has been noteworthy. More than 220 foreign institutional investors have already begun operations in the Indian market. In less than two years of operations, they have already invested more than 2.5 billion dollars. Indian companies have already raised over 3 billion dollars by way of Euro issues. An encouraging response has been received to our policy on foreign direct investment and the total approved investment is now around 8 billion dollars. About 80 per cent of this is devoted to high priority and infrastructure sector. It is a good sign that Indian credit rating by Moody's Investor Service has been upgraded. This favourable climate will no doubt further facilitate the task of our entrepreneurs.

We have been persistently reminded that political stability is a necessary prerequisite for economic reforms. In fact, it is essential in a democratic set up that all parties accept the basic parameters of any reform package. This will provide the political stability that is talked about. In India, we have worked hard to build a national consensus on the reforms. As in the area of foreign policy, we are endeavouring to evolve a non-partisan general endorsement of the basic elements of our economic policy framework. There are bound to be shades of difference in details but I am talking of the general approach. The essential non-partisan approach will provide the stability that everyone is looking for.

Let us look at issues that need to be addressed to enable us to continue on our path of growth in the interregnums. We have not only to preserve our comparative advantage but to strengthen it further. In this, I am acutely conscious that the new strengths will be technology and human skills, not low wages or availability of raw materials, or our geographical location as hitherto. You may kindly recall that in the meeting of the G-15 when comparative advantage was sought to be concentrated only on low wages, I, on behalf of India, did not agree with that and I made distinctly a point that the welfare of labour is something we are completely

wedded to and we are taking steps to see that comparative advantage is not seen in India only as low wages and the result would perhaps be that we will be subjected to certain sanctions and so on from other countries. I am trying very hard, and I think, I have succeeded to a very large extent in getting that odium out of the Indian scene.

A nation's competitiveness will depend on the capacity of the industries to innovate and upgrade continuously. Even in the so called low technology industries, competitiveness will be determined by the capacity to provide products of higher quality at the same or lower costs. Quality is now an imperative and not solely cost. The new paradigm will include quality and cost, with emphasis generally on the former. The existing skilled labour force needs continuous upgradation of skills. The same applies to our managers, engineers and scientists. Our companies must enhance investment in human skills and adopt a more rapid pace of technology upgradation. I understand that companies in countries which have achieved high growth rates devote 5 to 6 per cent of their total sales turnover and spend it on R&D and skill upgradation. In contrast, we find that the Indian companies spend less than 0.6 per cent of their turnover. This is grossly inadequate. With greater competition, I am sure that the pressures for such investment have already increased. I appreciate that it will take time for our companies to reorient themselves to new strategies, but it is inescapable and so, the sooner, the better.

Meanwhile the change in our Industrial Policy has made access to foreign technology easier. Not every technology but technology of normal production. I would have been extremely happy if what I have just stated would apply to all technologies. But obviously it does not. Some technologies are particularly to produce things in the normal course for the consumer industries and so on. Those technologies will come with joint ventures. I am not quite sure whether the technology which India really wants will come so easily. I am also not sure that the technologies that

will suit India are even available anywhere outside. This is something which all of you have to think about. I am coming to it a little later.

But again to wait for a better technology from elsewhere all the time will perhaps result in our getting only the latest but one at any given time; not the latest. This is where our own vigorous R&D will help first in enabling us to do at least a part of the job ourselves and second, motivate our foreign partners not to withhold the latest from us because he knows that we will do it ourselves anyway. This is the atmosphere we have to really build. If he looks at us as a partner who is only waiting for technology to come from him, human nature being what it is, we will not get the latest. This will, really, be a partnership between near equals which is what leads to mutual respect and confidence. This will forge healthy relationship between the Indian companies and foreign technology suppliers. We must ensure, however, that the technologies are absorbed efficiently and benefits are optimised. In turn, we must ourselves become innovators and creators of new technologies. Then and only then can our economy, development have a sound foundation.

I have recently come across an interesting facet of our R&D, which, to my mind, seems to have a long-term impact on the competitiveness of industries and therefore deserves attention even in the initial stages of industrialisation. The matter concerns a distinction between what is termed as 'product research' and 'process research'. We have got these terms in the GATT terminology in regard to patents. But now this is being applied more and more to research. The two cannot be completely separated obviously, but I understand that some countries have laid greater emphasis on the former while the others opted for the latter. Be that as it may, it is my view that *prima facie* there is need to lay almost equal emphasis on both product R&D and process R&D in India. Being a huge market, the attraction for the product cannot be either

subordinated or suppressed in any manner. At the same time, Indian industry needs to lay greater emphasis on process research as well, if it is to build up and progressively enhance its comparative advantage and compete successfully in the long run. The basic excellence generated in process research based as it would be on a deeper insight into pure science and a more incisive understanding of the why of things is, to my mind, more in line with India's traditional genius and should be fostered assiduously.

Here again, I have some basic postulates which I thought, I would place before you and though not quite urgent—we are not, really, required to find the answers tomorrow—but before we go too far in one direction, it is good to know that going only in one direction, not thinking of any other direction and all other limitations and requirements, would not be proper. So this is the time for us to understand the difficulty in choosing technologies and organising technologies in a country like India. Speaking for India, I submit that we have to find an equilibrium to be achieved among three factors: (1) The level of material benefit necessary for a human being to attain his full creative potential; (2) the level of exploitation of nature consistent with its needs to replenish itself—the environment and the huge questions that are now facing the whole world; and (3) the need to ensure comparable benefit to the vast masses of people and life—the social pyramid as a whole. This approach is not a mechanical compromise or an idealistic package. It accepts the realities of the present day world, values of liberal democracy and the limits on the state which globalisation of trade will require.

Although the time has not come in the real sense when state will wither away and it will have nothing to do with any of the matters concerning its subjects, it will not be so. But in any case if it is going to be so, that will be in the very long future. Immediately and in the foreseeable future, this kind of thing is not going to be there. The state will have a diminishing role, but that diminution in the state role will not come to zero as yet; it will take some

time. This is what my premise is. I have not come across any complete contradiction of what I think that there will be some role to be played by the state. This is the case everywhere in the world today as I see it, but the mix of course is different. It varies from place to place. It accepts the necessity and the efficiency of the market. But it finds its appropriate balance by determining the ends of economic development that a country can and should pursue. It involves defining to the extent possible what the word 'good' means when we are seeking to achieve the greatest good of the greatest number. Consumer satisfaction undoubtedly gives pleasure and pleasure is an essential ingredient of 'good'. But pleasure and good cannot be taken as identical. There must surely be a social and psychological and perhaps spiritual content of 'good' which is not purely market-oriented. You can't just go to the next shop and buy it. And I believe there is a difference.

In developed countries, the income of an unemployed is protected to an extent through social welfare. Yet social problems still constantly arise. This has compelled the realisation of the role of work in the human psyche. The basic role of action in the human psyche is stated in the Indian tradition when Shri Krishna says in the *Bhagvad Gita*—and I quote the translation: "There is nothing for the Supreme Being to attain and yet I engage in action". This is what Lord Krishna says. This is the real thing: What is *karma*, the definition of the philosophy of *karma* is not to work for wages but *karma* is a *dharma*. This is the kind of interpretation which is perhaps ingrained in all our thinking. One does not have to really elaborate it. Compensated unemployment cannot therefore be a substitute for employment. Doles etc. cannot be taken as a substitute for employment although our political parties are vying with each other in promising doles to the people and telling people, 'you don't have to work at all, everything will come to your door.' We are vying with each other in that and I don't know when we will really be able to see the implication of what we are promising to the people. This is not merely an economic phenomenon. It

has important social and psychological factors, besides being a corollary of the dynamics of creation.

The society engrossed in its own arduous struggle for existence is generally not able to care for its dispossessed, particularly when the numbers involved are so large. That is the real difficulty with India. With smaller countries, smaller populations, it is not difficult to cover the entire population within a period of a few years maybe, but can we really say that at any point of time we foresee that it will be possible for our schemes in India, whether you and I combined, or somebody else also helps us, to cover all the 90 crore and odd population which is increasing constantly. What exactly is the guarantee of that? There will be something more to do, no matter what you do. This is what appears to be the inevitable future of countries like China and India. These are huge populations, increasing populations and no matter how fast you make your processes of progress operate, there will be still something more to be done and it is not possible at any time at least in the foreseeable future where we can say we have done all that needed to be done. So this is the thing between many other countries and countries like India.

So there is the question of population. What can we do with it? Is it possible to bring it under control in the sense that you stabilise it at some point of time? Could someone tell me that in the year 2020 or 2030, this is going to be the stable population? I have made studies from one generation to another, from one generation to the next it comes down, from the next to the next again it goes up. This is the kind of curve I have seen in my calculations and I have been quite baffled by this problem. I have been discussing with experts, but I do not see any stabilisation or complete stabilisation at any rate visible in the next 20, 30, 40 years. So the planner in India is likely to feel bewildered all the time. He wants to do something, something else overtakes him. He wants to do something more and more quickly, even then some

other thing overtakes him. This kind of race is going to be there for a long time to come.

This again is the other point which I think FICCI should help us solve before it becomes unmanageable. When we take employment as an economic activity, the conundrum of the right technology confronts us. We have been talking about appropriate technologies; then some people have been saying all this is really not right, it is out of fashion, we should not talk about it and so on. Fashions in industry have been changing and industrial jargons have also been changing from time to time. But we have to be clear as far as possible on this. If you take to gigantism to obtain economies of scale, we accept sophisticated technologies which replace man with machine, accentuating unemployment and imposing heavy social costs. This is one side of the picture which is pretty clear. On the other hand if we inevitably accept the route of large scale employment with old technologies and low wages, a large mass of people as well as their economic activity including the product thereof remains at a primitive level in quality. This is the other picture. Both pictures you find in India today amply clearly. We just don't know how to deal with these things. You are getting into collaborations in making your companies, bigger and bigger all the time and what is the result of this bigness, this gigantism and what are the social costs? On the other hand, we have khadi and village industries and all that. We have been trying to revamp them also. In the last one or two years, there has been some effect, but is it possible for us ever to bring the two together? We have tried in the New Industrial Policy, particularly in regard to the small-scale industries. But the criticism has been that the small-scale industries are going to be simply gobbled up by the bigger industries and in the name of technology, you are destroying small-scale industries. So the patriotism of the small-scale industries people and the patriotism of the big-scale industries people leave me bewildered in between and I, really, don't know how to bring them together. This is the real problem.

Obviously, both these positions are unacceptable. I am not prepared to go primitive, I am not going to throw millions of people out of employment because I want a gigantic thing to come up in Delhi or Bombay. No.

There are six factors involved here: size, environmental acceptability, cost, quality, technology, employment potential. These are the six factors which I could think of as being relevant in this. Environmental acceptability and quality are obviously *sine qua non*. We cannot just dispense with them; there can be no compromise on these two. If the objective is to maximise employment potential and minimise the per unit size at more or less the same cost, the only imponderable that remains to be determined is the technology. This is quite logical. If you want all these things, then the thing which you have to go on increasing and increasing, improving and improving is technology. I see no alternative for populous developing countries to develop these technologies of the future. I do not see them anywhere today. I have visited more than 120 countries. I did not find any technology which can be useful specifically for the Indian conditions. If you go to hotels, they are the same; if you go to the roads, they are the same; if you go to stores, they are the same. These are more or less standardised globally. You do not find anything specifically being done for a particular country to suit its own needs. Now, who is going to do it for us? You get technology which is available in America, Germany, France, England, everywhere. But if it does not suit you, you may perhaps say that India does not suit the technology rather than saying that the technology does not suit India, and I cannot change India for your technology. Now this is a very important and very serious matter and there is no one else except you and me and the people of course who can think on it in depth. That is why I am raising this question.

I see no alternative for populous developing countries to develop these technologies of the future. I have coined a phrase

and I am glad to say that after I coined it some months ago, I have a corroboration of the phrase in one of the latest books on economic planning which I happened to read just three days back. One may call them the laptop models which possess all the six attributes I have just mentioned. Now we know the computers. We have the mainframe, then the PCs and desktops and now the laptops, what they call the book size. Now the smaller the size, the more sophisticated is the technology. Not just talking about technology, but the technology which is really needed for this country. Don't call it 'appropriate'. That has become rather an unfashionable word. But, in a way it is appropriate to our conditions. So I think a lot of raking our heads is needed on this particular thing.

About investment, again I have a lot to say. Investment is coming. I have also given figures. You give me figures. I give you figures back. This is how it is. But the investment part of it has also to be seen. Everywhere my ministers go, they tell me, the investment are coming in a stream, in a big torrent into India. Now I also have to ask myself: How much can I take from outside? There are limits. And those limits, if I do not recognise now, the coming generation will never forgive me because in the enthusiasm of getting investment, I have not considered many of the factors which a good Prime Minister, like a good housewife should consider. So those are the things connected with investment.

I am not saying this openly in public meetings because it will be misunderstood, but I am telling you. So there are limits to this. And within those limits, one has to keep oneself. So what does that mean? You are coming in, in a greater way. That is how it is. And I would like you to go into this also. After all you have lots of economists amongst you. We are not taking extreme positions. We are taking what I have always called the 'Middle Path'. What does that 'Middle Path' indicate in the case of India? When you take the subject of investment, foreign investment, more investment, when you take the subject of technology, when you

take the subject of environment—there is a middle path that needs to be struck. After deep thought, not mechanically taking something which is available anywhere in the outside world. No.

Jawaharlal Nehru named India's economic system as 'Mixed Economy', not a mechanical part admixture of the other two systems but a complete system by itself. It is not a hotchpotch in which some features of the other two happen to find place. This again is symbolic and rooted in our tradition. True to the liberal tradition in which your great institution is a custodian, India has never looked at progress as a single uni-directional straight and narrow path. You get more, you are more progressed, more and still more, you are still more progressed. That is not the way of looking at progress. You have to define what progress is. It is much deeper than a linear increase in anything. It is much more a holistic attitude, a holistic philosophy and it has always been so. The worst part of it is, we have forgotten our own tradition. Our tradition has never taken a unilateral view of progress. It has taken a multilateral, holistic view and that view has to come back in our modern times also when we are talking of contemporaneous subjects and particularly on policies which will affect the lives of millions and millions of people in the years to come. So this is just what I wanted to place before you because even Jawaharlal Nehru has been subjected to a lot of misinterpretation, or selective interpretation to suit an occasion or an argument. But as I understand him, his thinking is suited to the Indian genius, he has taken it from the Indian tradition itself of which he was a great exponent. So this is what we would like you, who are leading the industry, leading the new revolution, leading the new era to think over. So there is much that you have to think within yourself, within the country and of course a lot which you can look for outside.

The process of technology generation and adaptation is a complex process involving interaction between the producers and

the users. Our country is blessed with a large network of universities and institutions and research agencies. In the last few decades we have also succeeded in spreading industry to many new areas in the country. There are clusters of small and medium industries located in far-flung areas. You must take advantage and develop linkages between these clusters and technology institutions for skill creation and technology upgradation. New methods of partnership between government, industry and training institutions have to be devised to make this a reality. I am sure that industry can do much in this direction. It should be possible for the engineering colleges and technical training institutions to get associated with a group of industries. We used to talk about sandwiched courses. I have been an Education Minister long time ago in my State. Since then we have been talking about sandwiched courses. Even in engineering colleges, nothing happened in these sandwiched courses. Something needs to be done. You please interact with the University Grants Commission, make something compulsory. Unless you make it compulsory, nothing will happen.

In the New Education Policy, there has been a very clear policy statement on the part of the Government that we will do everything to see that the importance of degrees is reduced. The delinking of degrees with the jobs will be done. I am not sure if anything has been attempted because it is so difficult; it requires so many alternatives to be in place before you ram this down the throat of the people. It has not happened for very understandable reasons. But now is the time when you can have it. In most other countries I have seen, a problem is just thrown at a university and for the next one or two years, the university boys and teachers, everybody slogs at it and finds a solution and the industry gets it. This is quite common in other countries and extremely uncommon in this country at the moment.

While looking at the urgent need for the Indian industry to upgrade the managerial competence—now I come to managers of

course—I should like to highlight one specific area, that is development of capacity in managing labour relations. I hope there was the time when all management skills were found in the members of the same family. But it is no longer there. We go beyond the family to see if there is anybody better. Since I find unmistakable signs of that happening when I compare it with the situation as it was twenty years back, I am not condemning any member of the family but I am saying that there is something beyond the family also to look for.

So things are improving. I am happy about it. And the managerial skills are really the input that will make the difference between success and failure. I don't know how it is, but it is assuming an importance which is out of all proportion to what it was ten years ago or fifteen years ago. So I think that is something which you will have to go into more carefully. How do you really train a manager? Training a manager is not just giving him a course. It is something much more. He has to have a much greater, much wider insight into things and to get a right manager is more than half the work done for an industry.

I think, I have taken too much time and too many things have been rammed into this. It is not really a speech, I am talking to you as one who has to deal with you and with whom you have to deal. Indian market itself is large and growing. All the rest I wanted to say is commonplace.

I think I would like to conclude on this note that we have come to a stage where something has to be done. You have found it good. I have also found it rewarding and succeeding. This is the time when we have to look back and see what we can do to make it succeed, not just with speed but with the quality, the right type of success that we need in the long run that is much more important. India is too large a country, too complicated to think of today alone. Let us sit and put our heads together and see what

the situation will be for the coming generations and what we can do to contribute to that situation, which we think will be good for the coming generation. We are not perfect, but we have to see that future is brighter. I have been telling this to ordinary people. You don't have to tell the mother that she has to think of her daughter's marriage. She starts doing it the moment a daughter is born. So this society is like that. We never thought of today as the be-all and end-all of things. We have always thought of tomorrow, always thought of the future. The kind of prudence you find in the Indian society is something to be proud of. Why are we destroying it in today's consumerism? Let us put some kind of control, self-discipline in all these things while we are dealing with them.

This country has to have its own distinctive stamp on the future; future not only of this country but the future of mankind. We have that somehow whether we like it or not. I think we have a mission. Starting from Buddha and Gandhi, this country has never looked only in words. It has a mission; it has had a mission. And I don't think time has come when anyone can say that all the missions that India has had are over and we will have no mission at all now. It is not so. I am saying that there is something from this part of the world which has emanated, which has not really looked inwards alone, but which has gone out, which has shed some light everywhere outside and in this context of liberalisation, new industry, new society, the new industrial society that we are envisaging, is absolutely different. So far as I am concerned, I think it is going to be very different from the industrial society.

These are some of the thoughts that I wanted to share with you. I am not very clear because thoughts cannot be very clear. Once you start doing something, the work itself guides you. That is how you work. So you have to go on the right lines. To the extent we can say that in the last three-and-half years, we have gone on the right lines, to that extent we agree and this agreement

is of great encouragement to the Government and it should be of equal encouragement to you all. We have a common purpose. After a long time, we have hit upon a common purpose. Let us go ahead and see if there are any pitfalls, see if there is any scope for improvement, and I hope we will be able to fulfil the mission which we have embarked upon.

Economic Reforms for People's Benefit

I AM HAPPY to be present here on the occasion of the centenary celebrations of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). There is a special significance in the fact that these are being held in Calcutta. This city has played a pioneering role in the industrialisation of our country. It was our first industrial and commercial centre with special concentration of activity on tea, jute and engineering. With its strategic location, it will remain the focal point of the growth of eastern India. With new initiatives and impetus coming as a result of the new policies, I am confident that the city and this entire region will undergo a transformation.

I also congratulate you for a great achievement of a very recent origin and that augurs well for the industrialisation of this region. Things have changed so much that yesterday's opponents have become today's protectors and that is a matter of great happiness.

I offer my congratulations to CII on this happy occasion. The transition of CII from a body with five engineering company-

members in 1895 to its present status of an apex institution with around 3000 members, including large, medium and small industries, is indeed a commendable achievement. This institution now represents a diverse cross section of business and industry interests. The distance you have covered so successfully, indeed, augurs well for the long journey ahead.

Talking of journeys, it is undoubtedly an apt occasion to reflect on where we were, where we are now and where we aim to go. There is no need for me to recount the details of the deep economic crisis we faced in 1991. All of you present here no doubt have a personal, first-hand knowledge of that crisis. It is as well that people seem to have forgotten those days, which is one of the good characteristics of human nature. Let us, therefore, look at where we are. You have noted, that we see a revival in the economy and particularly in the sector of industry. The growth in the manufacturing sector in the first four months of the year at 9 per cent is, no doubt, encouraging. Since it is widespread and covers all segments of the industrial sector it adds great strength to the economy. Infrastructure industries have been showing consistent improvement in the last three years. The performance of the capital goods sector and units manufacturing consumer goods has also been improving consistently. The adjustment of the new economic environment is across the board. The agriculture sector has made an extremely important contribution to the economic revival and, in fact, provides the momentum to all other sectors of the economy. Our food stocks of over 30 million tonnes and our foreign exchange reserves of almost \$ 20 billion give us reassurance and confidence. This is, indeed, a great change from the conditions that prevailed in 1991.

The revival that we witness today has no doubt been achieved through hard work and a great deal of extra effort. The farmer in the village has worked hard, the worker in industry has worked hard and so have the managers and captains of industry. This

widespread response to reforms we announced in 1991 has made it possible for all of us together to pull the country out of the crisis. By any standards it has been a herculean effort. We should be heartened by our success so far and should move forward with renewed commitment.

I have always held that the surest guarantee for success in any endeavour is to back it up with a general consensus. In our case the reforms have moved forward thus far because of their wide acceptability. It has been my effort, it is my effort, and will be my effort that the broad parameters of our economic policies based on these reforms should be backed by a consensus in order to provide the policy with true stability. Today, as I take stock, I am heartened to find that this is indeed so. I am sure that all States need and desire rapid industrialisation, including the private sector. Some State governments are sometimes angry with the Central Government for not providing with the money they demand. But their anger is tempered with the knowledge that the Central Government also really does not have that kind of money they are demanding. They demand industries in the public sector, quite validly, but reluctantly agree to have those industries in the private sector for the excellent reason that they are, after all, necessary for the people. As for myself, I ask for no more, as of now. And I should like to announce with no hesitation that we are firmly committed to our reforms programme and shall move forward with confidence. Let the country and the world see for themselves that our reforms programme rests on solid and stable foundations.

Let me add here that stability must not be confused with rigidity. Reforms have their genesis in a realisation that change is necessary. The economic policies that we followed in India since independence brought us to a stage of development that sustained us well until 1991. Even earlier, need for change was felt and in the late eighties these changes were introduced. The crisis of 1990 and 1991 only hastened the process. The reforms were based

on the gains of the earlier policy. If deregulation and liberalisation became possible in 1991, it was only because the intrinsic strength of the various sectors of the economy had grown during the period since independence under the wise guidance of Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi and of Rajiv Gandhi, whose manifesto, party manifesto of 1991, is a clear and unmistakable pointer to what was to come. Our growth in agriculture had made us self-sufficient. Our industry was strong enough to cope with more open external contacts, both in terms of competition and collaboration. There is an underlying continuity in our policy that provides the basis for our reforms. The changes were made in response to emerging needs and realities. I have no hesitation in stating that the same spirit of responding to emerging domestic needs will guide the future course of reforms as they evolve hereafter. As we proceed with the reforms, shortcomings, wherever they are seen would be sought to be removed. I welcome suggestions for improvement notwithstanding their source, be they from you all, or from my fellow political leaders, from professionals or from the people. All this, however, will be entirely compatible with the reforms policy and will, indeed, be strengthening the policy, sometimes by urging refinements in the policy and sometimes by highlighting the human face which was a part of the policy from day one.

I would in this connection like to refer briefly to the recent debate where criticism has been voiced of the reforms. It has been said that the new policies have not benefited the poorer sections of society. Coming from a rural background and having had the experience of one meal a day during my studies for the degree course, my concern for the poor happens to be quite genuine. Through the decades after independence each government has been grappling with the problem of poverty. One important cause of our not being able to overcome this yet has been our inability to achieve rates of growth that were high enough. The percolation benefits of growth have not been able to deal with the problem.

The reforms aim at substantial acceleration of our rate of growth. But realising that percolation is time-consuming I decided on a lateral injection of resources at the level of the village to assist the poor by providing much more than ever before for employment generation, education, health and other social needs. This has come to be known as the 'Bypass Model', which takes care of one important cause of poverty in the countryside, namely, lack of full employment in the village throughout the year and consequent forced migration of rural people to towns in search of employment. In order to soften, if not eliminate, the hardship of inflation which has generally accompanied reforms all over the world; I introduced the Revamped Public Distribution System to provide foodgrains to the poor at a specially subsidised rate. For the industrial workers who might face hardship, a safety net was provided through the National Renewal Fund. No effort has been spared to keep inflation as low as possible.

I mention these not so much to convey information as to reiterate that we did not go into the reforms blindfolded but after full anticipation of the difficulties involved and a conscious effort to provide for them a system in advance so that the benefits of reforms reach all sections of society. All round benefit alone will be the test of the reforms eventually. During the period that it takes for benefits to become widespread, I shall have special schemes designed to reach those sections of the society that receive benefits with a time lag. To me statistics of rates of growth have little meaning. I have laid emphasis on the human face from the very beginning and that is how we have made efforts to proceed.

What is now needed is alertness to detect set-backs that may occur from time to time and to deal with them effectively and promptly. From recent experiences, I have concluded that while industries are set up, the common people have to be made to perceive the industrialisation of the country as being to their own ultimate benefit, and not something anti-poor as will be whispered in their ears by interested quarters.

I would at the same time like to stress that the real answers to the situation cannot be found in palliatives that might reduce the severity of symptoms but would ultimately only aggravate the malady. I do understand the dilemma of the politician everywhere who, in the absence of a genuine consensus on difficult measures, tends to accord primacy to measures of immediate benefit. There is thus a real need to reconcile and harmonise the short-term aspects of benefits to persons and families with the long-term aspects of benefits to the community which obviously also benefit individuals, albeit in an indirect manner. Our programme must, therefore, be appropriate to the individual, the household and the community and also bring about a convergence of the efforts in all the three directions at the micro level. This has been our thrust in the Eighth Plan.

A large jump in the allocation for rural development from 11,000 crores to 30,000 crores in this Plan includes schemes for employment generation, employment assurance, ICDS, immunisation, education and several other social needs. There is always the need to fine-tune the schemes according to the needs and demands of the people from time to time. However, it is not enough just to mount the schemes. Coupled with the schemes, there has to be a massive, intensive and continuous campaign of educating the masses of the people in their own idiom so as to remove the hiatus in perceptions which so often causes upheavals of various kinds. This change of medium at the grass roots level is of crucial importance and I am not sure that we have done all that needed to be done in this respect so far.

Pursuing a path of high growth rates calls for collective effort. Elimination of procedural hindrances by Government is necessary to create the necessary environment to allow entrepreneurship to grow, to develop and to thrive. We have attempted to do that. It is for the entrepreneurs now to unleash the forces of growth by investment, higher production and greater efficiency. New

investment and growth will generate additional employment and incomes. Consequent to growth in incomes will come increase in demand and so the spiral will take shape. The entire pyramid will grow. The concept appears simple and clear but applied to our country with its size, population and social complexities, it is an extremely difficult task to achieve smoothly.

With the environment for growth having been improved, the question of resources arises. Questions of technology, quality, productivity, competitiveness arise. In dealing with these issues we have to face the problem of external factors. Flows of investment and technology become relevant. Access to markets becomes important. Our economy can be seen only as part of the global economy. We can not remain as an island but have to see ourselves as part of the global system. At the same time, the island itself has to be in existence and there could be no jettisoning of national interest. What is being called globalisation is, in fact, only the effort to create conditions for becoming a part of the world. It is only then that we can expect to get from the rest of the world what we require for the good of our own country. I am sure that there would be no voice of dissent in our attempting to do that.

But there is no globalisation merely for its own sake. It has to be woven round the abiding interests of the people of India. However, since nothing is available for nothing, we can achieve our objective only if there is a demonstrable mutuality of benefit between the transferor and the transferee. The global economy is now almost entirely driven by market forces and these considerations can be overlooked only at our own peril. In our reforms we have made an attempt to recognise this reality. We have no obsession with globalisation but we do try our best to understand reality.

Some criticism has been voiced that foreign investors would swamp our economy. In this connection I can only say that so

far even though the response to our policies has been encouraging and foreign investment has been attracted, it takes us nowhere near the fulfilment of our requirements. I do not see this gathering as one which feels the danger of being swamped tomorrow. I feel that there is an air of great confidence here, self-confidence, and so this is the real answer to the criticism that is being levelled.

I would like to repeat two features of these foreign investment proposals to reassure everyone that neither are we being swamped, nor are we selling away our country. Firstly, almost 90 per cent of the proposals of foreign investment are in joint ventures, i.e. in partnership with Indian entrepreneurs. Secondly, we had announced our clear preference for investment in infrastructure and other priority industries. So far, of the investment amount in the proposals received over 80 per cent is in these very areas of our preference. Priority areas have been identified for foreign investment and the major share of investment approved is in sectors such as power, petroleum, metallurgical industries, chemicals, electronics, electrical equipment etc.

The apprehension that foreign investors are only interested in the consumer goods sector for access to India's market is not borne out by the proposals received by Government or approvals accorded. A few high visibility cases can cause a misleading impression. Industrial and infrastructure projects have a longer gestation period. Once these projects come on stream the tangible benefits of increased production and employment will be there for all to see.

Small-scale industry has a dynamic role in our development. This sector gives employment to almost 140 lakh persons directly and manufactures of about 7500 products. While this sector has been adjusting fairly well with the reforms, Government will enhance support to it. Credit, which is vital to the sector, has been increased by 4000 crores between 1992 and 1994. Specilised

branches of public sector banks for small-scale industries are already in existence and 100 more are in the offing. Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) will assist in technology upgradation and moderation in cluster areas like Aligarh, Ludhiana, coastal Kerala and Howrah. Government will also assist small-scale units in developing contacts with similar units abroad where they find it difficult to do so themselves. We shall assign one officer each in Government's Missions in countries where small-scale industry is advanced, exclusively to assist our small-scale units to ensure the technology they seek. With many more such measures, I am sure that our small-scale industry will rise up to the new challenges and flourish in the new environment.

Questions regarding appropriate technology invariably crop up when discussing issues related to an economy with India's endowments and factors of production. There is no across the board answer for this; it varies from industry to industry. Some industries will inevitably be capital intensive. This has little to do with the reforms or foreign investment. Many of the industries set up in our own public sector have a high capital intensity. There are other sectors where labour intensive methods of production are available and are competitive. The world over we have been witnessing shifts in location on account of high wage rates and cheaper alternatives available elsewhere. This applies in diverse sectors such as textiles, leather manufacture, electronics and several others. Investment shifts from other locations to India are often taking place precisely for these reasons and these would be high employment generation industries. This is part of the natural process of economic decision-making and it would be naive to assume that industries will deliberately be set up in India with high capital intensity without a consideration of relative prices and our established comparative advantage. At the same time, where capital-intensive technologies go hand in hand with higher productivity and wages, it should be welcomed rather than shunned. The decision finally would again be based on market forces.

I see no evidence that our entrepreneurs have been deficient in judgement. Nevertheless it may not be out of place to emphasise the need for a very careful selection of technology. In this connection, availability of technologies within the country also needs careful scrutiny by intending importers of technology. In due course absorption and adaptation of technology is not as important as having the capacity to generate technology. We have capabilities and we must make optimum use of our endowments in this field. There is no real substitute for in-house R&D in order to keep up competitive advantage, particularly when technological improvements elsewhere are very rapid and the rate of obsolescence very high.

It is well recognised that the system of controls and permits leads to erosion of honesty. The liberalisation process is dismantling these controls. I am painfully aware that during this transition when we are moving from the license raj to the liberalised system, when structural adjustments, procedural and attitudinal changes have yet to take root, some unscrupulous persons have taken advantage to indulge in malpractices. I would strongly condemn this tendency, but at the same time I do not believe that the direction in which we are now going needs to be given up, merely on account of these incidents. The real answer lies in freedom of decision-making, reduction in government controls, reduction in poverty, plentiful production and availability.

For some years past, one finds a heartening awareness of the need to preserve environment. As we chart our course of development, there is greater realisation that we need to make it sustainable and environmentally sound. We owe it to the people of this country to conserve our natural heritage. Our own efforts supplemented where necessary by an access to the technologies in use elsewhere should enable us to avoid problems of environmental degradation. In fact, I would like to add that in this respect India is by no means behind other countries because what tech-

nologies they have used so far have been wasteful, have been disastrous and need to be jettisoned forthwith. They also are groping for new technologies. So we are really not very much behind them. We are more or less abreast of them. And it is possible for all of us, the other countries as well as ourselves, to make this great contribution to the world as a whole, the planet as a whole, so that with collaboration we are able to find ways and means of saving the environment.

Agenda-21 which we had accepted in the World Environment Summit in Brazil two years ago is a good example. I am sure things are being done in accordance with the Agenda, although nothing is, really, free from difficulties when it is applied to a complicated world and a complicated situation. But I feel that things are hopeful, they are looking up and the environmental aspect of the world, so far as its future is concerned, is not going to be as bleak as it has been. It should be possible to pursue technologies which result in higher environmental standards, conservation of natural resources, and efficient waste management. There are numerous examples of initiatives which have resulted in preventing damage to the environment and at the same time have been cost effective. Our concerted efforts are essential in dealing with this major concern. There is much that we can do through indigenous effort, since our cultural heritage has always been particular about being friendly to nature and environment.

I am aware that the path of reforms is not a bed of roses, much less so in a democratic country of this size. However, this has been a difficult job for every country which has attempted it. I have no illusions that this is also a politically difficult choice, but like the many countries which have attempted liberalisation, have worked through it and have performed economic miracles. I am convinced that this is also the appropriate approach for us at this juncture. While there could be differences of opinion on the political plane, and differences in the nuances of reforms, I

am confident that every individual who hopes for the best for this country would realise that this is the best option available to us. At the same time, I would like to reiterate with all the emphasis at my command that whether the transition is long or short, the benefit in the interim should spread across the board and the sacrifices required of the society must also be spread across the board, underpinned by visibly and palpably equitable regimes. This is yet another way to paraphrase the 'Middle Path' which has been a standing theme in explaining my vision of the economic reforms process in India.

Your theme is 'partnership'. So let us be partners in this process.

Commitment to Upgrade Labour Standard

I EXTEND A warm welcome to all of you at this inauguration of the fifth Conference of Labour Ministers of Non-aligned and Other Developing Countries. This Conference having been convened under the umbrella of the Non-Aligned Movement, I shall first pay homage to the founding fathers of the Movement—Jawaharlal Nehru, Sukarno, Nasser, Nkruma and President Tito.

Non-alignment is not merely a movement. It addresses the wish of countries, big and small, to have the independence to choose their own destinies. Through its advocacy of goodwill and co-operation, it becomes a means to attain the objective of the survival of humanity without violence, of securing peace, prosperity and

equity amongst nations through their solidarity and inter-dependence without loss of their independence. It has a timely relevance on the occasion of this Conference which is meeting at the time of transition of humanity from the twentieth to the twenty first century, on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the Philadelphia Declaration and the 75th year of International Labour Conference.

Since the fourth Conference of Labour Ministers of Non-aligned and Other Developing Countries at Tunisia in 1990 and the tenth Summit of the Non-aligned Countries at Djakarta in 1992, momentous developments have taken place. Cold war barriers have broken down and the confrontation of systems has ended. The threat of global conflict has receded. Apartheid has been terminated in South Africa and the country has come back into the fraternity of the Non-Aligned Movement. After four decades of struggle, the people of Palestine are beginning to realise their legitimate aspirations. These are extremely positive developments. At the same time, we cannot forget that much remains to be done. Poverty and underdevelopment are pervasive. The planet's resources are consumed by a small proportion of human kind. Illiteracy, disease and hunger have not yet been eliminated.

In such a context, I am happy to find that this Conference has set for itself an agenda of subjects highly relevant in the present day context to all the facets of economic growth, human resource development, employment, social dimensions of economic restructuring and implications of trade and liberalisation for labour and labour standards.

Deliberations on all these subjects should necessarily be based on the foremost understanding that peace and prosperity are indivisible. We see around us, in very many parts of the world ethnic violence, disruption of peace and social tensions. The Labour Ministers, directly interfaced as they are with millions of the working people, can contribute to reduction of social tensions, social integration and establishment of peace.

Education is the foundation on which all the programmes for human development have to be built up. Without education, there can be no skill formation. Want of skills seriously handicaps creation of job opportunities. Again without education, awareness cannot be created in respect of the need for nutrition and health. People lacking in good health cannot constitute a productive work force. Without education, awareness cannot also be created regarding deleterious effects of unsustainably high population growth. We in India have taken a policy decision now to invest 6 per cent of our national income on education. I may suggest that this Conference should come out with a programme of action for education-based economic growth; for sharing the fruits of such growth in a more equitable manner.

The strategies for creating gainful and productive employment opportunities and for achieving the goal of full employment have to be viewed in the broader context of demographic trends. One-fifth of the world population lives below the poverty line. In developing countries, the ratio of this population is on an average 30 per cent. The world population is estimated to be growing at the rate of 94 million per annum, the highest record in human history. Nearly all the population growth is concentrated in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The growth of the labour force is influenced by the growth of the population. So employment policies should go side by side with policies for population control. Fertility rates have to be brought down. This would call for education and creation of awareness which I just referred to. The working people in the world over are the surest medium for this education and awareness creation.

While education and economic growth are vitally needed for promoting employment, a crucial factor which we cannot afford to ignore is the attitude of the people to employment. Mahatma Gandhi said, "There is enough employment in India for all who will work with their hands and feet honestly. God has given

everyone the capacity to work and earn more than his daily bread and whoever is ready to use that capacity is sure to find work. No labour is too mean for one who wants to earn an honest penny. The only thing is readiness to use hands and feet that God has given us.”

The essence of this message is that any form of employment is dignified enough. In this sense, self-employment and employment in the unorganised or informal sector are as important as that in the organised sector. They should be made gainful, non-exploitative, skill-based and productive.

Migration in search of employment has national and international dimensions. An effective strategy for pre-empting emigration of people from rural areas and consequent congestion and social tensions in the urban areas is provision of employment for people in the rural area itself. Jobs have to be taken to the people rather than make people move from their villages in search of jobs. How do we achieve this? There are job opportunities in the rural areas. The traditional employment of artisans in our villages would need to be regenerated. The artisans have to be put in possession of simple but superior technologies—whether they be village blacksmiths, carpenters or leather workers.

This will improve their productivity and the quality of their goods and consequently their marketability and therefore their income. Superior technologies will also improve the working environment of the artisans. They will protect them against occupational health hazards and disorders. There are also vast opportunities for creation and maintenance of vital infrastructure in rural areas which can provide gainful employment for those who face unemployment, especially seasonal unemployment. Based on this approach we in India have started a massive Employment Assurance Programme for our most backward areas in the country.

Women are central to human development. As spouses, as mothers and as part of the productive workforce, women wield significant catalytic capabilities—in limiting the size of families, spreading the message of the small family norm, imparting education to the rising generations and enhancing production and productivity of economic enterprises. So, women would need to be empowered through employment programmes specially designed for them and through a larger share in the political process.

Child labour is a sad reality of our world. It is not necessarily a developing country syndrome. Wherever it is practised, it has to be eliminated. I know elimination of child labour is generally the policy of all the countries assembled here. Inducing children to education is clearly the means to achieve this objective. Here again it is the woman as the mother who has the key role to play. No mother willingly wants her child to be subjected to the indignities and ordeal of exploitative manual work. We need to establish mother-centred programmes for the elimination of child labour. While diverting children from work to education, special curricula and syllabi would need to be drawn up. They should reflect the relevance of education to skill formation and employability in adulthood. Mahatma Gandhi called for basic education—what we understand in India as '*Buniyadi Shiksha*'. Education should prepare children to apply their mind, heart and hands to the work and inculcate in them the dignity of labour.

There has been much debate on economic reforms in terms of their social dimensions. Economic liberalisation has come to be widely accepted as essential not only to releasing the entrepreneurial skills of people but also increasing international trade and economic cooperation. Many of us in the developing world have, over the years, established highly protected economic systems. We have protected our industries, labour, trade, services and financial and capital markets. These policies have a definite historical context which accounts for their acceptance and adoption

in the early stages of our quest for development. They have given and established in our countries a sound economic infrastructure. As the world has changed, we have also to take note of these changes and modify our policies to ensure that we make the best use of our resources and the opportunities offered by the growing volumes of international trade and investment. This again is meant to achieve the same objectives which prompted us in the earlier decades to resort to policies of growth through protection and governmental participation and control. Thus the modification in our policy orientation, necessitated by global changes, has not been intended, and will not be intended, to achieve anything other than the eradication of poverty in all its myriad forms in the social and economic spheres. It is time that we send this message loud and clear.

Thus the fundamental objective has been and will remain the betterment of our people, especially the poor and the working classes. Now we can ill-afford to be prisoners in our own protective cocoons. We are now living in a world that has become increasingly interdependent and the results of our policies depend, more than ever before, on what others are doing. The need for international understanding and international cooperation is, therefore, of vital importance to all of us who are engaged in the struggle to make the world a better place to live in.

Change involves some hardship. This is true of economic reforms as well. Different sectors of the economy are interconnected. Changes in one sector have implications for others. Fragmental changes may not be effective. Wholesale changes may not be practicable either. Hence the need for a well formulated mix of reform measures within the framework of an overall design to be implemented carefully but with certainty. There is no quick-fix formula for universal application. What we must ensure, however, is that the sacrifices required to be made in the short terms by people are evenly distributed and fall the least on the weak.

Most of the developing countries have evolved policies and applied them to achieve these goals. We in India are making massive investment directly in poverty eradication programmes to benefit the rural and urban poor, side by side with economic reforms. Our programmes have had varying degrees of success. We have to compare notes, learn from each other's experience and avoid pitfalls.

Economies are increasingly joining hands for regional co-operation to benefit from the pooling of their resources and the synergy of their skills. This process reflects increasing multilateralism. This is, indeed, desirable. What is more desirable, however, is ensuring multilateralism as an instrument for enhanced market access. But there are also dangers of integration-based multilateralism becoming an instrument of closed economic blocs. The success of regional integration will, therefore, depend much on how the professed multilateralism is actually practised. I hope that the participants in this Conference would deliberate on their perceptions of the implications of regional economic integration and in the context of the labour problems that will be arising in all these countries and in all these economies.

In the context of globalisation and liberalised international trade, our perception of comparative advantage cannot be, and should not be, what has been generally called cheap labour. Simply by opening our doors for foreign direct investment, foreign investors will not be necessarily motivated to bring in their capital. They do not necessarily look for cheap labour. But they do look for skilled manpower of high productivity. So our strategies for fully availing of expanding investment and export opportunities should be those of upgrading the skills and productivity of our workers.

We also need adequately trained and motivated technicians and scientific and technological manpower. In the industrial countries, scientists and technicians constitute—and this is a very important figure—about 85 per cent of those who undergo pre-research and

development studies at the second and third levels. This figure is only around 9 per cent for all developing countries. You can see the difference. This situation clarifies why we secure technologies externally. Adequate investments, therefore, have to be made in the area of research and development to build up our own technological capabilities. Infrastructure for research and development should be created not merely as part of Governmental systems but as part and parcel of the industrial process itself.

A word about the linkage of trade concerns with labour standards. Having originated after the end of the First World War, as a pre-UN international agency, the ILO has rendered marvellous service in establishing a comprehensive and meaningful Labour Code. This Code is an inevitable benchmark for all of us who are dedicated, by Constitutional mandates and national social policies, to upgrading labour standards. This is an ongoing process and we are deeply committed to the basic principles underlying these efforts. This has been backed by actual performance and we have been able to improve the working standards of our labour force. However, it is a different matter when trade policy is sought to be used to enforce standards. There are several problems that we face and it would not be appropriate to use trade policy to address all these problems. It would be better to continue to work in the future in the same manner as we have done earlier, by understanding each other's problems and by working for a consensus.

My appeal to this Conference is: establish peace, invest in education and human capital development; control population growth; make employment productive, whatever be the form of employment; use woman power as a catalytic force for human development; eliminate child labour but prepare children to become productively working adults of the future; consider economic reform as an inevitable instrument for managing national economies better and for a better life to the large sections of the people; become competitive in the face of global economic and commercial changes

by projecting the skill of labour and not the cost of labour; and strengthen the hands of the ILO in securing non-coercive compliance to labour standards.

I have great pleasure in inaugurating the Conference. Let it be a path-breaking Conference in the annals of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Growth with Human Face

IT GIVES ME great pleasure to join you on the occasion of this Conference on 'Dynamic Asia' of the International Chamber of Commerce. It is heartening to note that this apex Chamber of Commerce has played a key role in promoting the development of trade and industry across different countries.

This Conference is being organised at an appropriate time when global integration has become an accepted programme of our policies. The theme of the Conference is also most relevant as the entire world is looking to Asia as the engine of growth in the remaining years of the twentieth century, and certainly in the twenty-first.

The success of Asian countries in recent years has been viewed with great admiration by the whole world. This continent includes a rich diversity of world's developing countries, some large and some small, some endowed with abundant natural resources and some not so endowed. Many of them have achieved high and sustained economic growth to raise significantly the living standards

of their peoples. The elimination of poverty in East and South-East Asia provides a beacon of hope to those who are still deprived in other parts of the world.

The rapid economic growth in Asia has largely been due to the accumulation of physical and human capital. Resources were most productively allocated to a mix of social and economic infrastructure sectors which increased the productivity of the labour force and improved the returns from scarce capital. Government intervention focused on the development of all round capability. The continuing absorption of new technologies, the introduction of innovative management practices and an outward orientation to the rest of the world have been among the key characteristics of the successful Asian countries. The diversity of experience, the variety of institutions and the dynamic policies pursued by the Asian countries have demonstrated that there is no one single policy package or a model of success. One feature, however, which is common among all successful countries is the combination of sound macro-economic management, market oriented economic policies and focused state intervention which has led to accelerated economic development.

We ourselves in India are going through a period of rejuvenation, renaissance and recovery. It is not easy to recall any period since the inception of India's vibrant democracy more than four decades ago in which so much has happened in so short a time. The country has undertaken a bold programme of economic reform to integrate the national economy with the international mainstream. An earnest effort is being made by India to usher in a new era of efficiency and competitiveness. The sole aim of this package continues to be the banishment of poverty in an environment vastly different from the one we started with after independence. In this endeavour India is determined to be identified with the rest of dynamic Asia.

We have now completed over three and three-quarter years of the New Economic Policy. The path taken by India in the economic reform process is unique. It began with a national consensus which as a pleasant surprise has widened and deepened as we went along. We have tailored the reforms according to our own requirements and we intend to continue in the same measured manner in future. We have succeeded in making significant changes in the whole economic environment with the minimum dislocation or hardship. Vast opportunities are now available for substantial investments to be made in the rapidly expanding Indian market. Significant expertise in entrepreneurship technology and financial resources exist in Asia. New India awaits your enthusiastic participation in this new buoyant environment of open markets and expanding opportunities. Despite the achievements of the last over three-and-a-half years, it is clear to us that we have a long way to go before we can be confident of achieving the kind of sustained and sustainable industrial and overall economic growth rates which are necessary for removing poverty in our life time.

The policies adopted by us since 1991 are aimed at providing the means for the transition to this kind of high sustained growth with a human face. I would like to add here that high sustained growth and human face are both extremely important. In our condition, I may assert that both are two sides of the same coin. One cannot be thought of without the other. It has fallen to the lot of the Government to demonstrate and convince people that we have a vital stake in both. I am looking for effective ways of bringing out the message of this stake loud and clear. I hope, even expect this Conference to devote some time and attention on this vital task which is yours as well as mine.

Let me now turn to the increasing significance of Asia in world economy. East and South-East Asia today represent perhaps the fastest growing region in the world. The remarkable growth of exports of manufactured goods from Asia is well known. The newly industrialising countries of East Asia increased the share

in world trade from only 1 per cent in 1970 to more than 9 per cent in 1990. What is equally significant is the mirror image of this high export growth to equally high surge in Asian imports. Today, the total volume of import of East and South-East Asian countries, including Japan, is about US \$ 750 billion. This is equivalent to the total imports of North America and United Kingdom combined. Thus, the Asian region has emerged as a major player in the world market. Its growth has been greatly facilitated by an open world and trading system which has provided expanding scope for the growth of its exports to developed countries.

However there has been a visible slowing down of economic growth in the west since the oil crisis in 1973. The level of income and prosperity in Western countries is already high. The recent protectionist sentiments in these countries are an indicator of the saturation of their markets. Thus, East and South-East Asia will need new markets to sustain their dynamism. The expansion of intra-regional trade, particularly the liberalisation of Japan's import regime has thus far sustained the growth process of other countries in Asia in recent years. The next few years and the decades to come will provide a rare opportunity for India to take advantage of its location and participate in this shift of the world economy towards Asia.

The progressive opening up of the Indian economy, and liberalisation of its trade regime could contribute to the growth process in East and South-East Asia in the face of the observed slow down of growth in the West. As productivity and incomes of the Indian people increase, the demands of our large population of 900 million will also rise substantially. This makes obvious that the mutual opportunities for trade within Asia will provide an engine of growth not only for Asian countries themselves but for the world as a whole.

The new sources of competitive advantage will be technology and human skills, not necessarily low wages. The four countries

referred to as the East Asian tigers have learnt to adapt to these changes with a rapid change in the product composition of their exports in response to their rapidly rising wage levels. The export of light manufacturing products is giving way to machinery and equipment. The ASEAN countries, on the other hand, are still heavily dependent on export of textiles, garments and consumer processed items. But in many cases they have also made substantial progress in climbing the high value added and hightech ladder. Different segments of the Asian economy can now occupy different rungs of this ladder. In principle, we in India can make a substantial headway in the export of engineering goods, both light and heavy, because of the existence of substantial technical sophistication at the engineering level accompanied by comparatively low wages. Engineering goods requiring higher labour input and individual fabrication can be profitably manufactured in India. Where necessary, we can freely import technical design, expertise and quality control processes from other countries. Another strength that India possesses is in areas such as computer software. These areas are in addition to the traditional areas of textiles, clothing, shoes, leather goods and jewellery.

There are vast opportunities that are being opened up in India for investment in much needed economic infrastructure for the kind of industrial and overall economic growth that we must achieve in India to banish poverty within our lifetime. It is essential that investment in infrastructure be accelerated more than it has ever been achieved earlier. The requirement of 900 million people, a billion by the next decade, for the provision of appropriate power, transport, communication, housing and other infrastructural facilities can only be imagined. In this area also, we have noted with a great sense of excitement the rapid infrastructural growth that has been achieved in other Asian countries.

We have also noted the expertise that has been built up in both the public and private sectors in these areas in these countries.

One example of the success achieved in infrastructural investment in East Asia is rapid transformation of many cities in the region. Cities such as Singapore and Hong Kong are among the world's foremost examples of clean and efficient urban environment. Here also the world can look to Asia for inspiration.

Government of India has already initiated the process of inviting private participation in expanding and strengthening infrastructure. We realise our limitation of resources. India is open for participation in all these sectors for the benefit of our people. You will find these opportunities to be exciting and rewarding.

India's development is of tremendous significance for the future of the developing world. To realise our development potential, we have to unshackle the human spirit of creativity, idealism and enterprise that our people possess in abundant measure. We have to harness all our latest resources for this purpose. We look forward to increased cooperation with the countries of Asia in this venture.

Ensure Greater Participation of Workers in Industry

I AM DELIGHTED to be amongst the public sector employees who are Shram Award winners. My congratulations to all the awardees. I am sure that there are hundreds of other technicians, supervisors and workers who are significant achievers and are working, but are not present here today. You represent that spirit of innovation and achievement. I appreciate your efforts. Your example would be a

source of inspiration and motivation to all your colleagues and workers.

Down the centuries, our workers have demonstrated innovation, ingenuity to design and intuition to improvise. Metallurgy, ceramics, textiles, gems and jewellery and architecture are but a few examples of areas in which they have exhibited creative excellence and productive efficiency.

After achieving independence, we consciously decided to assign the commanding heights of our economy to the public sector. We had to lay the foundations of a strong and diversified industrial base in the country. Industry in the strategic sectors had to be promoted. Basic infrastructure had to be developed to meet the requirement of industrial growth. In many of these sectors the requirement of funds and technology was such that no one except the Government could invest. Therefore, it was imperative to assign this role to the public sector. It is a tribute to the foresight and vision of Panditji that today we have a strong industrial base on which both public and private sectors can build and compete with the best in the world.

Some of the public sector enterprises have been very successful. Some have lagged behind. The problem before us today is of restructuring enterprises which have not been successful to subserve our socio-economic objectives. Even today it is possible to go into areas where private sector would not go and play a pioneering role.

The world has changed considerably since the time these policies were introduced. India has also changed and so has the nature of our problems. However, our objectives of a strong economy with improved standards of living and quality of life remain to be fully achieved. In this context, I would like to recall the prophetic words of Panditji at the Avadi Session of the Congress: "Our economic policy must therefore aim at plenty. Until very

recently economic policies have often been based on scarcity. But the economics of scarcity has no meaning in the world of today.” This was in 1955, almost forty years ago. These thoughts are even more relevant today.

In this context, we should remember that nearly Rs. 1.5 lakh crore have been invested in Central public sector enterprises alone. There are other sectors, particularly the social services sectors like Rural Development, Education and Health which have equally competing demands on financial resources. Keeping this in view, we should make every effort to get value for the huge investments made in our public sector enterprises. Otherwise, we cannot aim at plenty and create an economically equitable and socially just society.

Our democratic industry had been protected from competition by the use of tariffs. This protection was, indeed, needed in the earlier stages of our industrialisation. But protection always has a tendency to spread a certain sense of complacency. In the long run, this is not conducive to productive efficiency. We also need to give a boost to our exports and for this, it is necessary to expose our industry to the winds of change. I am glad that the industry has also responded well. Exports grew by over 20 per cent in 1993-94 and by 17 per cent in 1994-95.

How well India faces up to challenges posed by the new international economic conditions depends on our capacity to respond pragmatically to these changes. The response can not be based on any set ideology or abstract theories. The response has to be essentially ours, in our own Indian way to benefit the millions who are still waiting.

I am confident that we do have world class managerial manpower. We also have a working class which is capable of absorbing new and diversified skills and technologies. We are also blessed

with natural resources which should be the envy of many other countries. Our industrial enterprises should bring all these endowments into meaningful interplay so that efficient and optimal use of factors of production is universalised.

How do we do this? The most important thing is to make full use of our manpower. The managerial employees should themselves become the role-model for productive efficiency. They should set an example by their performance and conduct for securing higher levels of productivity, economy and quality. They should recognise that manpower has to be managed well, even as machines have to be maintained and upgraded. In all these efforts greater participation of the workers must be ensured. Greater participation can only assure greater motivation and innovation. This would also ensure total quality management so essential to meet the challenges of greater competition.

What is manpower management? It does not mean mere mechanical identification of redundancies and mindless downsizing of manpower. Inter alia, it does mean a very careful, objective and humane exercise on the part of the managers to prevent job losses through 'retraining and redeployment'. 'Retraining and redeployment' is not a one shot phenomenon. It should be taken as a continuous exercise to improve employability of the workers by imparting new skills that are required for enterprises, consistent with changes in technologies and by opening up new areas of growth which would provide increasing avenues for gainful employment. It should be taken as a means of securing life-long employment for the workers. I am happy to note that Sangmaji has pressed the Directorate General of Employment and Training into service and given it a new mandate to start short skill training courses in different parts of India. While this service can be continued and expanded, what is more important for the enterprises themselves is to have arrangements for in-house training of workers in new skills. After all, investment in human capital is as important, if not more, as investment in physical capital like machines and buildings etc.

Our labour laws are often quoted as model instruments for securing the protection and welfare of the working class. Our workers, trade union leaders and managers, while using these instruments, should treat them as the means for securing ever-increasing productivity and commercial viability of their enterprises and thereby enhancing their competitive edge. I perceive that this approach is fast becoming current—as reflected in the virtual universal endorsement of the new economic policy, cutting across party lines and governments.

The citations in respect of recipients of today's Awards clearly reflect the enthusiasm, dedication, perseverance, courage and technological innovativeness of our work-force. They have, in their own small but significant way, contributed to cost savings, hazard prevention and import-substitution. In terms of the cumulative value of the services rendered by the awardees, Shram Awards by themselves may not be adequate compensation, but they are symbolic of the nation's gratitude to the workers, technicians and supervisors concerned. They are also symbolic of the recognition of the skills of the managers of the enterprises in motivating their employees.

Lastly, just as I was distributing the Awards, it occurred to me that at least some of them can be classified as examples of the creation of intellectual property. We have been very diffident in this matter and some of our friends in this country have been negative. Now is the time for the public sector undertakings and those who have got these innovations. Something new which was not in existence has been made. This is not only for this industry, but similar industries everywhere in the world, particularly in the developing countries. Now, I would like the managements to consider and Sangmaji, also to examine to what extent this intellectual property which has been created by our creative workers can become the permanent property of the country or the public sector undertaking whichever way you look at it. Because this cannot be

wasted and in fact, this will be, just taken like that as everything in this country has been taken outside and there it has become more valuable than it has ever been to us. This should not happen. The patenting and whatever is to be done on new ideas and new products created as a result of new ideas should be done immediately. Laws and whatever is to be done to take advantage of this should be done immediately.

It may be small, it may be big it may be a very very ordinary thing, but that ordinary thing is going to save crores and crores in a given industry. It is not an ordinary thing at all, it is an extraordinary kind of intelligence that has gone into it and I don't see why the country, or the person or the undertaking should not take advantage or get the benefit of this innovation. It is not just innovation, it is invention actually. Therefore, this could be good for other countries where similar wastage is taking place which they cannot afford. So this can be a very good catalyst for economic cooperation, technological cooperation among developing countries at least. Maybe the developed countries would find it too plain for them. But at least the developing countries where similar industries are running could find it extremely useful. So this is the thing which needs to be examined further and I hope the Ministry will consider this. I find great potential for the country and the individuals.

I had advised earlier that we should rationalise the system of selection of awardees in such a manner that we also identify the worker who could be honoured by the principal award of Shram Ratna. I find that even after rationalised scrutiny, we have not been able to identify anyone deserving this highest award. I trust that the managements and workers will come together and strive for achieving higher levels of excellence so as to qualify for Shram Ratna Award as well.

Thank you. I wish greater achievements for the awardees in the future and I wish the undertakings greater achievements as we go along.

III

Science and Technology

Electronics in National Development

I AM EXTREMELY pleased to be here to inaugurate this year's Science Exhibition, which is organised every year on the occasion of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's birthday. It is, indeed, appropriate that 'Electronics' which represents the technology of the future has been chosen as the theme for this year.

Panditji always felt that India should participate fully in the march of science. It is fitting that the exhibition in his memory has been organised on this forward-looking theme.

Electronics extends a pervasive influence on the life of all of us, whether in our offices, factories, schools or at home. It has a wide variety of applications ranging from the highly sophisticated in space, defence equipment, telecommunication, computer systems etc. to common consumer items such as radio, television sets and watches. It has found use in our programmes for literacy and education, health care, agriculture and population control. It would not be an exaggeration to say that electronics has a use in all sectors of activity in our country today.

Electronics is essential to develop a competitive modern economy. It has altered the cost structure as well as quality and productivity standards of most industries. It is the fourth largest industry in the world with a global output of US 700 billion dollars in 1990. As Indian industry seeks to globalise in the framework of new economic policies, it must also seek to use the benefits of electronics for sharpening our competitive edge.

The Indian electronics industry contributes about 1.3 per cent to the GDP, which illustrates that there exists a vast potential for further growth in this sector.

Speech while inaugurating the Science Exhibition organised by the Department of Electronics,
New Delhi, 14 November 1994

Convergence between computers and communications has resulted in the development of information technology which has rendered the world a global village. Indeed, the competitive advantage of nations is being increasingly influenced by the extent of its information technology infrastructure. We have, therefore, to concentrate on strengthening this infrastructure and using it for national development.

Developments in this sector are taking place continuously. This has opened up a vast range of new forms and concepts for handling information. For example, with advanced telecommunications and computer systems, financial markets have become integrated into a worldwide round-the-clock operation.

Similarly, any time anywhere communication based on mobile cellular satellite and PC technology is fast becoming a global reality. This coupled with the development of information super highways based on optical fibre is making the integration of voice data and video available through the integrated services digital network.

Effects have also been felt on the way business and government offices are organised and staffed. This exhibition is an illustration of how India is adjusting to these changes.

Government on its part is committed to promote the growth of this industry. Our software experts enjoy a worldwide reputation. Exports of computer software from India are the single largest component of our electronics exports.

We are also progressing in the electronic hardware sector through the scheme of electronics hardware Technology Parks of the Department of Electronics. Foreign firms have also shown considerable interest in investing in India in the electronics sector to avail of the competitive advantage that we have in this sector. A proposal for development of an Information Technology Park

in Bangalore by a Singapore company has been approved and it is expected that the major information technology companies would seek space at this Park.

The electronics industry has another special feature as an important source of jobs. Despite accounting for less than one per cent of the investment in the industrial sector, the electronics industry directly employs 2 per cent of the industrial labour force. In addition, it is estimated that for every single direct employment in electronics, there would be two jobs created in the secondary and tertiary sectors.

Another noteworthy feature is that this sector has opened up many more employment avenues for educated youths, particularly for women. The electronics industry is one that is going to continue to grow rapidly. In view of our inherent strength of skilled manpower, large market and a sound industrial base, the Indian electronics industry should witness substantial growth in the years ahead. The liberalised framework of the economy should enable the industry to realise its full potential. I hope that this Exhibition increases our awareness of what has been achieved and what remains to be done.

Since we are having children also as a part of this programme, may I point out that whether it is electronics or computers or any of these technologies, in the ultimate analysis, they have to be our servants and not our masters. This is what Rajivji had said many times when we were writing the New Education Policy. He spent a considerable amount of time in going into the details along with all of us of the CLASS programme, the introduction of the computers in the higher secondary schools. It was not just the introduction of any course as we do, but it was something very specially designed for the children to acquire new skills without losing their old skills. These old skills are basic and no new skill can be a substitute for this. Skills should not ultimately mean only button punching. Even

there, mistakes can be committed. You punch the wrong button and the whole thing is a disaster. One has to be very careful. The human skill that is available by nature, given by God to every child, has to be protected. Only then you can build on those skills and go on to higher skills. This is not an easy matter to plan. It looks very glittering to the naked eye when you first look at it. But if you find what disasters can take place in this automation, extreme automation to the exclusion of human judgement, you will see what the country can come to, particularly a developing country like India where so many things are lacking.

You cannot go to the far off places in Rajasthan and introduce computers there unless you have a special build, a special hardware. At the same time, you are to train teachers. The teachers have not been quite cooperative in this, because they have to learn first. The teacher thinks that he is only supposed to teach, not to learn anything himself. So there you have another barrier. All these barriers have to be removed and the whole planning of the scheme has to be done on a very well-thought-out basis.

The CLASS project was made on those lines. I have no knowledge of how it is faring at the moment. But when you introduce anything new, anything by way of technology in competition with other countries, then you have to be extra careful that what you have, you do not lose in acquiring what you don't have.

Technology for Prompt Telecom Services

WHAT I REALLY want you to do is demystify this. If it has not been clear to the Prime Minister, how it goes? Now the mystery remains. There is a satellite that is being used. My first impression was that the satellite is going to deliver the money to me, when you say Satellite Money Order. Now the name itself is misleading. So what is it you are doing? You are doing the work of shortening a particular part of the entire transaction. The time taken in that is being made instantaneous more or less. But then at the other end, somebody has to deliver and if he takes ten days, then your satellite is of no use. So if this is instantaneous, you have to match this with speed at the other end. Otherwise you will be adding to the discontent of the people. Today, people know that it is coming by train and takes its own time. There are so many things. Now if they come to know that the post office fellow is going to get it instantaneously, your post office man will not be safe unless he does it with equal speed to match the speed at the other end. So this is a multi-media kind of thing.

So this is what I want to tell you, that the step to be taken is to educate the people how it comes. You tell them how it is coming from New York. You are able to see the BBC. How you are able to see this on your TV, etc. The same thing, instead of the TV, it is received in the post office. Make it simple for the people to understand. And if something goes wrong, they know where it has gone wrong. And be prompt about taking action wherever human agency is concerned. That is what I would like to say. These innovations are coming every day. We have to keep pace with them. There is nothing more we can do.

This is how, I think, you are making use of a facility for something which has been found to be time-consuming. We have read in the newspapers that a particular letter has taken 25 years to reach its destination and all those jokes which have been published in the papers, as if every letter takes 25 years. It is not true, but then sometimes this becomes news.

So today we are minimising the chance of a particular part of the process taking a long time. It does not go by train; it does not go on foot; it does not go by courier; it does not go by a pigeon and all the rest of it. Now it goes by satellite. Therefore, there is no way anyone can say, 'I have not received it'. Your Post Master cannot say, 'I have not received it'. Suppose he embezzles it, he cannot say, 'I have not received it', because there is nothing between the sender and him, except the satellite. And the satellite cannot be wrong. The train may go wrong. There may be a train accident. Something is lost. What do you do? So those things can give him an alibi. The man sitting at the last place—the Post Master—has no alibi now. He has no defence, except his own integrity. So integrity should increase at that end.

Please look after these things. I wish you well. You go ahead, do any number of innovations. That is how science and technology need to be used for the good of the common man.

Science and Technology : Key to Sustainable Progress

I AM DELIGHTED to be here with the members of the Indian Science Congress Association (ISCA) in this historic and many splendoured city and to address this august audience.

It is an excellent tradition to bring into the ambit of your deliberations a major theme that bears upon societal issues. Your chosen theme for this session, “Science, Technology and Industrial Development in India” is, indeed, of current relevance. I shall make a few observations on this theme for your consideration. But let me first pay my tribute to Calcutta, indisputably an eminent centre of science and scholarship.

India's three Nobel Prize winners, Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, Sir C.V. Raman and Mother Teresa, who won the coveted prize for their contributions made on Indian soil, performed their principal work of extraordinary creativity and dedication here. The number of savants, scientists and great personalities that this region has produced is, indeed, numerous and defies a count even of their names. I shall, therefore, refer to just a few of the eminent scientists and their work.

Raman made his epochal experimental discovery working with a modest apparatus to investigate scattering of light by liquids at the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science (IACS), which was set up in 1876 by Mahendralal Sarkar with meagre resources. IACS was perhaps the first dedicated centre of modern scientific research. It is worthy to note that meagre resources were no deterrent to the vision of Sarkar or the dedication of men like

Raman. In the context of your theme, it is important to appreciate that a basic science discovery, such as the "Raman Effect" came to be developed as a high technology tool to probe materials, thanks to the advent of laser technology.

Even prior to Raman, among the first few Indian scientists to be internationally known, was J.C. Bose, who carried out his research work in Presidency College, Calcutta. Bose specialised in generation and study of properties of radiation in the hitherto unexplored wave-length range of a few millimeters to a few centimeters, the so-called "microwaves." He went on to demonstrate wireless transmission of microwave signals across distances and solid obstacles. Again in the context of the focal theme, it is fascinating to take note of the enormous developments that have occurred in microwave technology after the Second World War.

Let me also mention the name of S.N. Bose, whose work in theoretical physics introduced a new statistics for quantum particles, helping us to understand the behaviour of matter at extremely low temperatures. Yet another contribution of seminal importance is Saha's application of the concept of thermal ionisation to stellar atmospheres; this is recognised as having marked the beginning of modern astrophysics.

I consider it important to mention at least one more name, that of P.C. Ray, who succeeded in preparing the chemical mercurous nitrite; a compound that was earlier thought to be unstable. His discovery inspired him to carry out extensive researches on nitrites and he went on to establish an Indian school of Chemistry. His patriotic zeal was manifest not only in his authentic work on the history of ancient Indian chemistry but also in the startling fact that he set up Bengal Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals in 1892, an industry which he started from his residence. It is this spirit which needs to be revived in huge measures and I trust that the deliberations of this Congress will help to recapture the kind of

drive and dynamism that a scientist like Ray displayed in setting up a research-based industry.

Calcutta made its impact in the field of science not only through great men, some of whom I have mentioned, but also through institutional establishments. Several professional bodies and scientific institutions owe their origins to Calcutta. The Asiatic Society in 1784, the Zoological Survey of India in 1857, the India Meteorological Department in 1875, the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science in 1876 have all been instrumental in building a scientific base and culture. Indeed, the Indian Science Congress Association, which is doing a magnificent job of promoting science, started here in 1913 and continues to have its headquarters at Calcutta. J.C. Bose and M. Sarker at Calcutta, and Raman at Bangalore, founded laboratories to provide facilities and opportunities for original research. I am happy that the Government of India, through the Department of Science and Technology, today supports the Raman Research Institute, the Bose Institute, the S.N. Bose National Centre for Basic Sciences and the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science as also the Indian Science Congress Association.

Some of the initiatives that I have described even precede similar initiatives in setting up professional bodies or scientific institutions in the Western world which claims that the pattern of development in science internationally is essentially based on the western mode. This is clear from several statements like the one by a leading American chemist that "Science is a Western European social invention." It is, therefore, interesting to observe that Calcutta's Asiatic Society formed in 1784 preceded in point of time the Royal Institution in London which was established in 1799.

P. C. Ray's research in chemicals and his setting up of a chemical industry in the late 19th century was not very much removed from the discovery of aniline purple, the first of industrially

useful coaltar derivative dyes, by the English chemist Perkin in the 1850s which led to the setting up of a chemical industry. But the key difference lies in the fact that the advent of a chemical industry based on a scientific discovery such as the one made by Perkin led to the birth of research laboratories of German chemical manufacturers. It is this aspect to which I would like to particularly draw attention of our industrialists.

The more we analyse the way science and scientific institutions evolved in India, prior to independence as well as thereafter, the more we see analogous features elsewhere in the world. However, there are key differences and these pertain to technology issues and those related to industrial research which gives us an idea why Western national economies prospered through science ahead of the rest of the world.

The investment that the Government made in the field of education and research and in setting up universities and institutions has been considerable in India. This has resulted, as you are all aware, in a significant growth in the number of universities, teaching institutions, polytechnics and national laboratories, whose number is several times more than those that we had at the time of independence. We have set up several Government Departments to deal with science and technology. Some of these are dedicated to selected areas like Space, Atomic Energy, Biotechnology, Ocean Development and Non-conventional Energy Sources. Several science and technology institutions have also been set up under the Socio-Economic Ministries. The Public Sector Industries have their own Research and Development (R&D) Units. All of these together command the support of a sizeable pool of science and technology personnel. However, with all these massive inputs by the Government, the total number of R&D personnel is not more than 3 lakhs out of a science and technology stock of more than 3 million.

The investment by the Government has to be augmented through parallel investments in Research and Development by the industrial houses. It is only then that we will be able to show a substantial increase in Research and Development expenditure, matching the Gross National Product (G.N.P.) percentages of the leading economies of the world. It is only then that fresh avenues for engaging R&D personnel will become available.

The Government is certainly willing to provide as much help as possible to industry to facilitate such investment for R&D and generation of employment of research personnel. Several incentives are available even today including those that we introduced recently. Apart from fiscal incentives in terms of tax concessions in regard to in-house R&D expenditure and weighted tax deduction for sponsored research, duty exemptions have been made applicable for R&D work of the scientific and industrial research organisations. Further, development financial institutions like Industrial Credit Investment Corporation of India (ICICI) provide conditional grants for advancement of commercial technologies. Government agencies are also today extending project support to encourage industry participation in R&D.

In addition to the above, I am happy that the Union Cabinet has recently approved a new Fund for Technology Development and application which is expected to accelerate the development of indigenous technology and its application to production processes. A 5 per cent cess on payment of royalties on imported technologies will flow into this Fund. The Fund will be placed at the disposal of the Department of Science and Technology to help commercial exploitation of indigenously developed technologies as well as technologies imported from elsewhere.

Industry must respond to these steps that the Government has taken by enthusiastically investing in scientific research and by promoting technological innovations.

The Government's consistent support to science in the country during the successive Plan periods has created a colossal asset in terms of the framework of scientific institutions and a treasure in the form of scientific personnel. I have no hesitation in saying that our scientists have earned a name for themselves and their country internationally. The output of research is measured nowadays quantitatively in terms of scientific publications. India's research output in terms of this yardstick is considerable. Our expatriate scientists have made a mark. Thus we are in a position to say that India has demonstrated capability and has a proven track-record of competitive science. Not only the Government but also the industry must support this established capability so that it continues to grow from strength to strength.

Metaphorically, if science can be looked upon as springs of knowledge and understanding, technologies are the waters which flow as rivers into the ocean-like market place. I am glad that economists are now able to confirm the role played by technology and its importance in determining economic growth and prosperity in a country. In the early years, it was assumed that capital and labour alone were adequate for growth. Now this is no longer so. Using technology as an engine for development, many countries are not only improving their economy, but also the quality of life of their citizens and the environment they live in. The impact of technology is more pervasive than ever before because of recent innovations in several areas of technology such as communications, information, materials, biotechnology and more recently in technological interventions in manufacturing.

We in this country must also endeavour to muster technological strategies as vehicles for development. As I said at Jaipur last year, technology development or innovation is not alien to Indians either in the past or the present.

We have witnessed during the recent decades what science and technology have done to agriculture. Our scientists and farmers

transformed a food-deficient country and we enjoy today a sense of food security in the nation. We have many lessons to learn from this success story as well as from what has been achieved in the mission areas of defence research, space and atomic energy. The nuclear power reactors, communication and remote sensing satellites and the space launch vehicles are high technology systems successfully developed here. There are many lessons to learn from such experiences and these are applicable to the industrial sector as well. A key area that we have to focus on today is our manufacturing—both old and new units can benefit through improvement in quality of goods and efficiency in production. These, in turn, will bring about increase in employment and enhancement in income so desirable at the present stage of our economic growth.

There is a major misconception about the role of technology. Because of the perceived efficiency and enhanced scale of production people fear loss of employment. At the recent annual meeting of Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), I brought up the seemingly conflicting pictures of small village industries and large-scale manufacturing plants. The ingenuity of the Indian mind is capable of innovations that will obliterate the apparent contradictions that seem to characterise the contrasting pictures that are painted while discussing the small and the big. I am also happy that at the same meeting the FICCI leadership almost instantly accepted the challenge posed by me and promised to come up with the necessary solutions. All I can say is: I am waiting.

More telephones do not automatically mean that more people will be out of work. Instead, more will be employed in telephone and cable industries, more in laying out new communication lines and many more for maintenance. The prosperity and the well-being of our people will increasingly depend upon how successful we are in integrating technology, from wherever it may be obtained,

with the specific needs of the society. This issue needs to be jointly addressed by our technologists and industrial entrepreneurs. It is also true that one of the concomitants of progress is that one kind of employment is reduced, but another kind of employment is created and increased at the same time. Generally the transformation is from the unskilled to the skilled. It is here that rural areas tend to be left behind. Education and training in the rural areas is, therefore, of the essence, in order to spread the benefits of modern industrialisation in a balanced manner and maintain social harmony and avoid excessive economic disparity as far as possible.

This discussion leads me to the important question of technology choices. This is obviously not an easy question to answer. There must, therefore, be dedicated exercises to examine and plan for technological interventions. I am sure that such technological assessments and planning of strategies will necessarily take into account indigenous resources, in terms of raw materials as also human skills, as well as other required technological support systems and the potential links with related segments of technology and production bases.

Today, the issue of environment looms larger than ever before. Even in the economically prosperous nations, they had not taken into account the dangers to environment. If they had, the atmospheric pollution, manifest in such phenomena as the ozone hole, would not have arisen. Indeed, if today India can develop its own forward-looking, environment-friendly technologies, the same would be attractive to the other countries as well. I am referring to all these with one uppermost thought, namely that technology implementation and durability will be the key to sustainable progress, and that this requires, above all, skilled personnel and a very active and intensive R&D underpinning.

Let me touch briefly on the issue concerning on-the-job training or retraining of workers. I do not think we are paying

enough attention to it. We can have knowledgeable scientists and engineers in adequate numbers but we could be ending up in not having enough technicians and highly skilled craftsmen to transform concepts and drawings into manufactured products. I remember some years ago when I was Health Minister, I was very surprised to find that we were then producing as many as 14,000 doctors every year but the number of nurses we were producing was about 7,500. Whereas from all standards accepted all over the world, the doctor : nurse ratio has to be 1:3 at least. Now this is the kind of inverted pyramid that seems to have evolved in the educational system in our country and on the medical side, indeed, it has led to many difficulties including even of the nurses who were being trained here, going to other countries for better paid jobs and we in India are finding ourselves short of nurses.

You are aware that computer and communication technologies are revolutionising the way we learn, communicate and practice what we have learnt. This technology has brought the world to our doorstep. Can't we use this technology for developing the necessary tools for training and retraining our workforce? This has been said again and again but somehow the follow-up action which needs to be undertaken on this has been lagging behind. In fact, ten years back when computers first made their appearances in India, there were all kinds of snide remarks against them that they were something for the rich, something for the millionaires, something for the multimillionaires and not for the poor people. Now every typist is getting trained in word processing and computers have practically taken over everywhere in the country. In any case, in the next five years, you will not have old Remington horses anywhere except in the museums.

Here again, I must point out that at one stage we were concerned with the introduction of computers in our service industries as there was an apprehension that many may be thrown out of jobs. We had several strikes on this particular point. Instead,

what we have seen is the availability of better and enlarged services and more people beginning to work with computers. You can see this in the railway reservation counters. Such innovations are possible in many areas of service industries and this, in addition, will link our industries both nationally and internationally.

Let me also refer to technology in relation to science. I had mentioned about the value of technological tools in the context of Raman's light scattering experiment or Bose's experiments on microwaves. Clearly, a technological milieu was necessary for those discoveries to be transformed into powerfully usable systems. We are, therefore, to build this technological infrastructure which can then be appropriately grafted on to the scientific base that we have. In fact our Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) people told me that they have as many as about 250 ideas/discoveries to their credit. They have completed everything at the laboratory stage. They have been proven, have been established but technologically they have not made any advance for the simple reason that we do not have the capital to do that. I had mentioned this to some of our friends abroad when I went to those countries and they were amazed that there were as many as 250 ideas/models and there was no one to take them forward into the market place through technology. This does not happen in other countries. The moment an idea occurs and it is perfected and proved in a laboratory, there is always someone coming along without any delay who takes up the idea, puts the money necessary in it, transforms it into something of a tool for the service of the nation and then himself makes money. This is how it is.

For scientific discoveries and scientific work to surface in the manner that the common man envisages, it requires an environment of technological and economic strength. We have to build this strength and we have to build it jointly with industrial enterprise because the natural habitat for technology is really the industry. It is the workers, engineers, designers, researchers and

managers of the industry who can nurture technologies and grow them.

In the developed world, industries have had several decades of experience of endogenous technology development. Having experienced the benefits that accrued, these industries do not any more require external stimulants by the Government for investments in R&D or technology development. Several industries in advanced countries have been moved in the direction of backward integration, so to say, by actively promoting research in basic sciences in their own units. It is not, therefore, surprising to find that scientists of industrial laboratories have gone on to win Nobel Prizes in physics, chemistry or medicine, a privilege that had remained by and large that of scientists outside of the industrial confines. When research encouraged and supported by industry achieves this maturity, any worry about bridging inputs to science, technology and industry will become a thing of the past.

Not being in such a situation yet, we have to strive to bridge available strengths in our scientific institutions and those of the industrial enterprises. Advances in science invariably take place in the universities and national laboratories. Application of new knowledge requires business acumen, industrial enterprise and involvement of labour. Advances and application then require interfacing personnel and institutions.

I am glad to see that this is happening in some measures already. Several major academic institutions and universities have developed consultancy cells and specific technology transfer outfits to interface with industries and respond to their needs. Quite a few of these interface systems have begun to show trends of joint actions with industries.

There are instances of the public sector industries having been given opportunities to build various systems for Indian Space

Research Organisation (ISRO), Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Department of Atomic Energy (DAE). Clearly, apart from business opportunities, there has been upgradation of the technological capabilities of the industries concerned. ISRO, DRDO and DAE have also in recent years instituted interface mechanisms through their technology transfer groups to provide technology spin-offs to industries. Antrix Corporation, of Department of Space (DOS), Composite Products Development Centre (COMPROC) and Non-Ferrous Materials Technology Development Centre (NFTDC) of DRDO are examples of such interface organisations which link the laboratories and the industry for effecting supplies in free market conditions. I may also add with a certain amount of pride that yesterday, the Scientific Advisor to the Defence Minister came running to me and gave me a paper. I said: "What is this for?" He said: "It is to be used for tomorrow's speech at the Science Congress." I asked him: "What does it contain?" He said: "Sir, we are not confining ourselves any longer to the defence part of the laboratories, they are doing fine, but at the same time we are branching out into civilian areas and we are doing quite well." And he gave me some examples. I am very glad that he was so enthusiastic about it. This will happen, this kind of give and take will take place between all institutions of technology and research. CSIR has today succeeded in significantly enhancing its extra-budgetary support and has even exported its technologies and services to some well-known firms in the West, as I was just mentioning to you.

I am sure the capacity and potential to serve in the global Research and Development market-place exist in a substantial measure and it would be necessary for several of you here only to take the first few steps to make a mark and the rest will follow.

It is now for industry to take vigorous steps to promote in-house research and technology development as well as respond to the initiatives taken by the scientific agencies and institutions.

The vision that I have for India is not merely that of an exporter of services or of agricultural products, or an exporter of products produced by our artisans and the small-scale industry, but all of these and more and indeed for the country to succeed as a large-scale exporter of technologies. This will be realisable if we can grow technologies in the soil of science, and I can assure the industry, if such assurance is at all needed, that Indian science is a soil that is originally rich.

The twentieth century has been witness to phenomenal developments in science as well as in technology. It turned out, as we all know that technology was a double-edged sword that produced positive as well as negative results depending upon the way it was deployed. Undoubtedly, quality of life improved dramatically through its products. However, technology polluted the environment and we are now working on finding alternative technologies. The other major negative use of technology was in the production of instruments of destruction. When military power acquired great muscle, one could discern the direct correlation between the quality and the strength of the weapon systems and the technological progress of the country which made them. Defence industries become a fertile ground for the growth of technologies.

The situation today is markedly different and the swift changes that have occurred in the global scenario are apparent. There is a transition now which, one hopes, is taking humankind away from military power. In this scenario, technology will be increasingly deployed in civilian industry in support of building national economies. India must derive the benefits of this “peace dividend” as it is called, and that is now becoming available. The opportunities for India to harness science and technology to produce economic returns are legion. For this to happen, as I described above, it becomes imperative for scientific and R&D activities to develop as cooperative endeavours.

In doing so, let me add, we cannot afford to be unrealistic to societal conditions. India is still largely a rural economy and our people have to be assisted to absorb what science and technology can give them. Always conscious of this, I have spoken of the need to take science and technology to large masses living in the villages. In Baroda, when I addressed the Science Congress, I did give our scientist friends a task of this nature and they promised to do that task for me. When I asked for a review of the action taken in response to the suggestions that I had made during the recent sessions, I was informed that a number of Government Departments had stepped up their efforts to implement some of my suggestions and also the scientists themselves have taken to working more closely with the people, trying to know their felt needs and examining how these needs could be fulfilled through science and technology. That is a welcome development.

It is gratifying to note that CSIR has begun a series of training programmes to assist the small-scale industries in modernisation and upgradation of technology. Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR) have taken up advanced research in a variety of agricultural products. More than 250 Krishi Vigyan Kendras have been established for technology transfer and demonstration. Gene banks and plant tissue culture techniques have come up. Non-conventional energy sources are receiving greater attention. Media are reaching all corners of the country. Telephones and other forms of communication being provided down to the Panchayat level. Ministry of Rural Development have programmes for setting up technology development and transfer institutions as resource centres in rural areas to develop technologies appropriate to specific geographical locations. I am particularly gratified that the outmoded tools used by our rural artisans are being upgraded or replaced by improved ones in a country-wide programme. This programme we had taken up right at the beginning, that is in 1991, I made this announcement and then the programme started. I am informed that during the last two or three years, the programme has advanced

very well and about 40 per cent of the villages in India have been covered. I would specially request science and technology institutions to undertake a sustained and intensive participation in this programme which must then become a continuous process on a decentralised scale and reach every village of the country effectively. This will bring a silent and nation-wide revolution and enable India to regain her exalted position in village industries which she had occupied prior to the advent of the imperial regime some two centuries ago.

All this is gratifying to note and I would like to see substantial expansion in these activities alongside industrial growth, for it is imperative that the results of technology are coherent with societal conditions. A mismatch can produce strains which need to be minimised and eliminated as we diffuse technological developments. In the ultimate analysis, technology must be looked upon as a societal enterprise. Then only technology can be a liberating force which we can use for the welfare and benefit of the teeming millions.

Tagore, Raman and Mother Teresa were mentioned at the outset of my address. It occurs to me that they symbolise a wonderful triumvirate. Tagore was an expressive poet with extraordinary philosophical insights. Raman was a great scientist and a powerful communicator. Mother Teresa is an exemplary missionary and an embodiment of love. The common people of India formed the centrepiece of Tagore's thoughts and Mother Teresa's work. The famous words of Raman that the solution to India's poverty lies "in science, more science and still more science" reflect the same sensitivity. In the same spirit we must strive to achieve India's scientific excellence and technological progress so as to foster industrial development both for the betterment of our people and for attaining her rightful place among the major agro-industrial nations of the world.

There was a time when art was intimately associated with religion and glorious expressions of the artists were delivered in

the service of religion, which in the process brought religion closer to the people. The creativity and the excitement of the scientists need art and literature to provide a medium not merely for the use of their products but essentially to inculcate the vision and the values of science. The purity of the scientist's intellectual labours and the way he views nature and phenomena with a sense of awe, mystery and inquiry, his urge for understanding the methodologies of his probing effort, its systems and eventually the humility with which the true scientist looks upon his conclusions, all have overtones that are not very different from those experienced by the poet or the visionary. The birth pangs of creativity and the eventual ecstasy of creation are common to all the three. Bringing all these noble impulses closer to society requires communication with a sense of service and devotion to the people.

I am articulating this for I have no doubt that the basic values of science are for the whole universe, and in particular, have an enormous impact on society. I would like to urge our people and all of you to actively work to achieve this integration of value systems even more than providing products and processes of science and technology that society needs.

I am sure, what I have said conforms to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's description of what he called the scientific temper. His faith in science for India was part of his being. Let me then end with what Panditji said at the 1947 Indian Science Congress in his Presidential address which was titled "Science in the Service of the Nation."

"We have only scratched the barest surface of the Indian people and yet we have done tolerably well and now when I think of what we can do....when we open the doors of opportunity to a large number of people in India, then the kind of picture I see rather overwhelms me. If we could tap, say, even five per cent of the latent talent in India for scientific purposes we would have

a host of scientists in India....I hope this Science Congress, meeting at a time which in India's history is a very significant time, will prove also very significant for the development of science in India."

We have come a long way since then. We have made phenomenal progress in several fronts since independence. Science and development issues have also acquired newer facets. But the words of Panditji are true even today and the task of working with the people is even more relevant than ever before.

INSAT for Education and Development Communications

THIS IS A long awaited occasion for the INSAT System. The Indian National Satellite System was originally conceived as a system for bringing in the information revolution to every nook and corner of the country. It was meant to be a tool for educating the people and a vehicle for mass communication. We have been using INSAT for educational purposes for more than a decade now, but considering the magnitude of the task, the scale is still small. Even this has had considerable impact.

It is true in every society, developed or developing, that the fundamental requisites for proper education are class rooms, student-teacher interaction, learning by experimentation and sustaining literacy by practice. In our country of enormous size we use all available means for furthering the educational and developmental efforts. In this age of information, all developmental efforts

require excellent communication channels—effective, widespread, inexpensive and accessible. This is where space technology can play a vital role.

From the time India experimented with the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment in 1975, satellite communications technology has advanced by leaps and bounds. We have our own INSAT system, which Indiraji dedicated to the nation nearly eleven years ago. Now, we build our own satellites which are as good as any in the world. The satellites have become more and more powerful and the cost of receiving signals from satellites have come down. Satellite Television has spread everywhere.

All this has enabled the introduction of an initial “Training and Developmental Communications Channel” through INSAT. This channel is fully inter-active in nature and will enable the participants to play an active role in the whole process. In these times of fast changing technology, there is a need to constantly upgrade the skills of our industrial workers. The success of our technology missions depends on the communications and training of the field level persons. Such channels will enable our best teachers to talk to the large number of engineering, medical and other college students spread all over the country. Continuing education and professional inter-action at all levels is a must for development.

More importantly, in rural areas our farmers are eager to have access to information so that they can bring the agricultural productivity of this country to international levels. This calls for generating awareness of the latest technologies and techniques that could be brought to bear to our rural development efforts. This in turn calls for interaction between experts geographically separated from farmers in rural areas.

I find that the lectures to Panchayat women include use of very progressive techniques in the field, such as space based maps

and other modern scientific tools for watershed development. We place considerable importance on watershed development and I am confident that the participants would find this programme of great use.

The success of various experiments that ISRO has conducted so far, including the present one for Panchayati Raj elected women representatives and rural development functionaries in cooperation with the Karnataka Government has demonstrated the efficacy and versatility of the system. I am happy to note that a studio-uplink facility has been established at the Indira Gandhi National Open University campus. There is so much more to do, in terms of technology, in terms of reach and in terms of capability. INSAT is a highly successful multi-purpose system and will continue to carry on its role of building a communication structure for India and this will include channels for entertainment. But we want to give a firm and lasting base for use of INSAT for education and development communications.

At this point, I would like to add that, now that the uplinking and the communication is complete what we have to concentrate on is the software. The teacher has to be of the highest standard. If he is not knowledgeable, what he communicates, is only confusion in hundreds of the people in other camp. I would like to emphasise on this point as ultimately it is what one receives, and the quality of work one receives that is important. All the other things have been taken care of. After all this is the human element and that has to be taken care of.

I take great pleasure in dedicating this Training and Development Communications Channel through INSAT to the nation and wish it a great success. I hope that this channel will expand rapidly and many more teaching ends at various locations in the country would be established. I also hope a large number of institutions and various Government and Non-Governmental agencies dealing with developmental activities will come forward to use the facility.

Develop the Best Technology

IT GIVES ME great pleasure to be with you on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Indian Institute of Chemical Technology (IICT). I should like on this occasion to extend to the Director General, CSIR, and Director, IICT, and all others, who are associated with this great Institute, my greetings and felicitations and I should specifically like to express today, the appreciation of the people of India of the valuable service rendered by the IICT over the last fifty years.

I was fresh, a young man coming out of the university, in 1944, struggling to settle in Hyderabad in some profession, particularly in the legal profession. But we were very alert to what was going on in 1944, 45, 46. Those two or three years were eventful years in the history of Hyderabad State. We were waging a political struggle on the one hand but at the same time, we were able to appreciate what was being done in the field of development. Many of the projects had come up during that time. So, I vividly remember these institutes coming up brick by brick, at the time while we were engaged in a struggle. Those days were really hectic. When I think of this Institute, I am reminded of those very eventful days.

Golden Jubilee is a happy occasion, and an achievement for any institution. But it is also a time to look back and reflect what has been accomplished; to think of the myriad people who have contributed to make IICT what it is today, and also to analyse how IICT could serve the nation better in the times to come. On this occasion, we admire the foresight and vision of the VII Nizam of the then Hyderabad State in founding the Central Laboratory for Scientific and Industrial Research in 1944—at a time when the Second World War was raging and there was a severe crunch on resources. It is

to his credit, that he conceived of a laboratory that would combine in itself scientific research with R&D of economic significance and value. I am happy to note that ICT today, has a proud record of technological contribution which has an important place in our industry. At the same time, it has nurtured scientific talent that is recognised and respected both nationally and internationally.

I recollect a period in the fifties when Dr Hussain Zaheer was the Director of the Laboratory. His zeal and contagious enthusiasm greatly contributed to the establishment of the magnificent edifice of these laboratories. Even in those early days, pioneering work was done here. The credit for what CSIR is today, mainly goes to the commitment that Panditji had to science and technology and the interest he took in building institutions like the CSIR. He realised the potential of this Institute and in order to facilitate its sustained growth, in a scientific culture, made it a part of the CSIR family as the first of the Regional Research Laboratories (RRL) with the aim of using science and technology for the exploitation of the resources of the State and region. I am told that RRL did well in this endeavour as well.

Since ancient times, India has had a rich tradition in science. Several scientific discoveries and inventions and their technical applications can be traced back to the ingenuity and endeavours of our people. With the advent of British Rule however, science was relegated to the background and technological self-reliance was given the go-by. As a result, the rich and valuable resources of the country gradually dwindled and its economy became import-dependent. Since independence we have endeavoured to build our scientific and technological strength. India today possesses a massive science and technology infrastructure spread across the country. With over 200 universities, 1500 Research Institutions and 4000 Ph.Ds. being turned out every year, we are in an enviable position as regards quantity and quality of human resource. This gives us a marvellous opportunity and a competitive advantage to be

a global platform for R & D. The era of global cooperation in trade, brought in by the establishment of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) has opened up immense opportunities for our people in agricultural R&D but what about industrial R & D?

The information revolution is establishing laboratories around the world for accelerating the process of globalising industrial Research and Development. We, in India have to be a part of the process, and not be left behind in this race. I understand that your Institute has made a small beginning in offering its services globally—but I think the potential is huge and much more can be done and achieved. I realise and appreciate that it is not only the quality of R&D that matters in such effort, but also the cultural perceptions and impressions of doing business with India, as also the quality of the infrastructure. As you are all aware, we are making all-out efforts to improve our communication, transport and power sectors, augmenting our own scarce resources from different sources at home and abroad. This would also bring in the latest technology and necessarily give a boost to indigenous Research and Development effort in several ways both in competition and cooperation. At this point I should remind you of what I have gone through as a minister, as a person in quest of things from abroad.

I am sorry that in spite of Dr Varadarajan's suggestion that I should come and spend a day here, in the laboratories, with the scientists engaged in the laboratories, considering my deep interest in science, I have not been able to find the time. I regret very much that this has been so.

Dr Kalam has been after me, for a long time, to visit, the DRDO here. I had visited that place along with our late Rajiv Gandhi when he was Prime Minister and I was Defence Minister. I still happen to be the Defence Minister but I have not been able to find time. Ten years ago we were struggling to get a cray computer from United States. It was supposed to be a very highly developed computer,

needed for a number of uses, but for some reason or the other, I don't want to go into the reasons we could not get it. Now Dr Kalam tells me that we have developed in the DRDO a chip computer which is much more powerful than the cray computer. This has been done by our own scientists, our own engineers.

I am so proud of the DRDO and the CSIR. I would certainly like to find, at the earliest opportunity, one or two days to visit your laboratories, just to see how things are shaping and how these young men and women are building the future of India, because the future of India depends upon technology, for being able to compete with the best in the world. Now this competition is very important. What I wanted to say is, that in spite of our best efforts, you are not going to get the best technology. At the most you may get the next best. But you cannot do with the next best in the next century. You have to have the best. Either you get it from abroad, or you develop it at home. Since you cannot get it from abroad, you will have to develop it at home and the IICT and institutions like this have a great challenge in this. I am sorry that we are not able to appreciate—quite a number of people who are supposed to be knowledgeable are not able to appreciate—the importance of WTO, the importance of GATT for instance. We have been trying to build walls around ourselves—become what they call frogs in the well. Any attempt to take the country out of that well are facing stiff resistance.

It is said that I am selling the country abroad. It is said that I am really mortgaging our science and technology to others. I am telling you in no uncertain terms that unless you are able to compete and be the best in the world or among the best in the world there is no future for this country. And all this is not for the satisfaction of the elite. It is for the poor. How are we to make them understand that whatever is happening here, it is for the poor men, poor people and not just for the nawabs or the multimillionaires who can get best from everywhere and anywhere they want. We can give something inferior to the poor people and say they may do with this. They will

not allow that, they will insist on the best being given to them, and why not? They have a right to do that. But if we cannot understand the symbiosis between the life of a poor man and what is happening in the laboratory here—it doesn't look like some poor men are coming and doing something here, but what is being done is ultimately for the poor man—if this nexus is not understood, then we can never progress in this country. So we have to understand these things.

One very important field going out of my text at this moment, because it occurs to me that India's rich flora and fauna—India's rich medicinal herbs are not being exploited in India. We have the Aswagandha, which is now having a roaring sale in all the countries of the world by the name of Ginseng. We have the Sarpagandha. We have so many other things which are being taken outside and perhaps, laboratories outside the country are working on them. We are very blissfully unaware of what is happening to our own things. This is our intellectual property. This is our heritage. There has been a lot of discussion, lot of controversy about intellectual property. There are friends who don't want you to take the next step. You have to remain where you are. But then, if you are where you are, you will remain where you are, the world is not going to wait for you. You will be left far behind and then rue the day when you did not really keep pace with the developments in the world.

I am placing all these things before you because the scientists who are working here, are doing a patriotic act—a patriotic duty—they are not just doing something to eke out a livelihood. They are doing something for the country—which no other person can do, that we cannot do. Therefore, this is something which needs to be understood—what Panditji wanted this country really to be. In science and technology, in those days, even today when I find that we there is so much of resistance, you can imagine how it was—how difficult it was—for Panditji 40 years ago. People used to call it a 'fad', *Panditji ka fad hai—woh cahta hai*. This is what they used to

say. He used to speak on science and technology. He used to speak on international relations. Like a teacher, he used to teach us and those of us who were able to catch some bits and pieces here and there from what he said, I think, had been doubly blessed because, we had some idea of the future that he was envisioning.

Today we don't seem to think of Panditji at all. We don't seem to think of our great scientists of 2000 or 3000 years ago who have given the basic material for all science and technology anywhere in the world. It became extinct, but someone else took it up. Someone else developed it. Sometime back, I was told about a scientist, a lady scientist who came from the United States, and she was just going around the country. We thought, what was this? What was she doing? What was she looking for? She seemed to have said to one of our people she had come all the way from the United States to India to see a Neem tree. That has become the pride of India, the treasure of India. Should the IICT not be aware of this? Should the scientists here not be aware of the wealth that is available in the country and base their science, their technology, their research primarily on what is available in India? I am making this suggestion from this platform. I am sure, Dr Rama Rao and his very brilliant friends and colleagues will take it up.

I may inform you that I saw a book published by the Government of Vietnam giving as many as 200 medicinal herbs—rare herbs found in Vietnam. I have never thought that a country in such a traumatic condition, which has passed through two wars, ravaged, will be able to produce this book. The book is, really, a classic. Now, such things are available in Asian countries. It is available in Vietnam. It is available in China. It is available in India. It is available in Japan, and so many other countries. The others are protecting their property, we are not, to the extent we should. So, in the Government of India, I have decided to have a separate department with a separate minister for the Indian medicine.

If the people want, if they are enthusiastic, if the IICT is enthusiastic, I am prepared to grant whatever sum is needed for research in those areas in which the experts in Ayurveda and the other medicines collaborate with you and you come to me with your demands. There has to be something original, something that is real indigenous science, indigenous R & D and this R & D is not new at all. It has been there for thousands of years. What we are doing is only to resurrect what has been there for a long time, what has disappeared for various political reasons.

Functioning on a global scale requires a high level of professional competence. In the area of global R & D, we do not have much of prior exposure and experience. One aspect that we need urgently to prepare ourselves for and strengthening our system is the area of intellectual property protection. Our people, even in the villages are highly creative and innovative and in our traditional generosity we do not hide from other countries the technical and technological improvements and developments we make. We seek for all to benefit from them. Now, this has been more or less our attitude. If we have something, let everybody share it. Others don't share it. There comes the difference and the time has come, after the WTO, when you have to go along with the others. They are protecting their intellectual property. We have to protect our intellectual property. At the moment, the amount of protection that we have given to our intellectual property is next to nothing, almost nothing. Anybody can walk into India, take away anything, do anything with it and sell it back to us at ten times or 100 times the price. We go and buy it. Now, this is our misfortune. We have to get out of this vision. I wish that message of the importance of patents is made known to all, including our young friends, in schools and colleges, so that they imbibe a culture of protecting their innovativeness from the initial stages of their career.

I understand that whilst IICT has significant technological developments to its credit, this is not reflected in its patent's

portfolio. I am sure that as always, you would take advantage of the opportunity and do better, in the years to come. The same is true of CSIR's R & D effort in general. Much of it, as Dr Joshi told me, has not been exploited commercially, for want of entrepreneurial back-up. Now we can get everything, ready-made from other countries easily, and if your foreign exchange position is a little better, then the tendency is much more. There is no compulsion to do things here indigenously. So, you go abroad, get whatever you want. But, as I told you, what you are getting from abroad in many cases, in a vast number of cases, is not the latest. It is only the second best.

Therefore, there is no way out, if this needs to have our own R & D brought up to the highest levels imaginable. I had occasion to take up this matter with the Prime Minister of Singapore and there was a prompt response to it. The Prime Minister of Singapore said, "If you have got so many inventions, so many ideas, so many things developed in the CSIR, I will send a team of scientists to find out what is the technological and industrial potential of those things and we will pick up some." I was told later that some were really being picked up. But I do not know the latest position; Dr Joshi, I think, will tell me. But this is where you can have collaboration, you can have cooperation with other countries, which are far ahead of us. We have the entire East and South-East Asian region which is far ahead of us in many respects but at the same time, wants to cooperate with us in every way. Such efforts would continue vigorously and India should take her rightful place in the world as a protector of her intellectual property and get her eminence, duly recognised.

I am not suggesting that industrial R & D institutions like IICT abdicate their responsibilities completely to the industry. We have to chart out a path on which we raise the level of our research and keep abreast of global R & D through international work. At the same time we have to keep up R & D for Indian industry that would make it globally competitive. Now where does this begin? It begins with the university. The New Educational Policy says this in so

many words. People have not read it, people may not have understood it. The universities have to start this. In other countries, it is the universities where the R & D work is concentrated most. In our universities that should happen. In the institutions that should happen.

The third leg of the stool is the industry. This is how, you develop. This is how a kind of cycle sets in. Each institution is helping the other, each institution with its own conveniences, being able to do better than the other. So each has its conveniences, each has its limitations. But all the three coming together can get over all the limitations and pool together all the conveniences and this is the kind of combination that needs to take place. At the same time, we have to keep up R & D for Indian industry that would make it globally competitive. We have to strike a proper balance between national commitments and international aspirations.

IICT and its cadres and staff, past and present, have served the country with distinction during these fifty years. But, as I said, the best is still to come. Now is the time for a real breakthrough in the activity of the IICT and institutions of all the CSIR family and outside and this is the opportunity which we have to seize in the next two or three years. If we do not seize this opportunity, then we will be left behind. I am warning you, I am encouraging you, I am requesting to you to go ahead and take this opportunity with both hands and see that India in the 21st century is something qualitatively different from what it has been in the 20th century. A century is something of a landmark. We have only five years to go; within these five years we have to be ready for the 21st century. It is not just the change of a calendar. It is the change of an attitude—change of the minds, change of the culture, it is change of the outlook of an entire generation, particularly, the younger generation. This is what I wanted to tell you. Please train the younger generation to take on the responsibilities of the 21st century. That can be done only in laboratories of this kind, institutes of this kind where intellect and utility both interact with each other.

IV
Education, Culture
and Sports

A Unique University

I AM EXTREMELY happy to be here in the Hamdard University complex on the occasion of the convocation and deliver the address. At the outset I congratulate all my friends who have been awarded degrees by this university. I express my desire for your success in your profession and for a full life which would be, from all points of view, replete with the sentiment of achievement. There is not the least doubt that in the years to come all of you will have to face new challenges and confront them because we are passing through a phase where big changes are manifesting themselves.

Hamdard University is a unique university of its kind which is engaged in imparting education suited to the needs of the circumstances. In this university there is a combination of ancient and modern learning. In your training institution there is a beautiful coming together of tradition and change. The challenge of change has to be faced by us not only in the universities but also in the entire society. I want my young friends and colleagues to keep before them the picture of the changing situation. This century is called the century of change. In this century many developments, human efforts and ingenuity have scored great successes. During this time, big changes have occurred in science, technology and other departments. Under their active influence, a world has come into being which is much more interconnected and interdependent than before. As the years of this century have passed, the peoples and nations of the world have been bound together in different types of relations. In the old days it was possible for nations to remain aloof from one another, but not now. Many countries are trying to come into groupings based on geographical limits, traditional relations or cultural commonness.

The Industrial Revolution which began in the eighteenth century reached its climax in the twentieth. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries there were signs of progress like the opening of coal mines, steel mills and textile mills and in the early parts of the twentieth century there were signs like motor cars, telephones, radio sets and other consumer goods. The Second World War gave birth to a new technology which helped in the establishment of consumer goods industries and new ways of creating goods. The services sector was so much utilised that the GNP got a big boost. In the second part of the twentieth century several technologies and methods have come to the fore which are totally different from the methods used in the first half. If in the old days electricity was used in industrial machines, now silicon chips are symbolic of the new technologies.

Western scholars and observers are now agreed that the revolutionary changes that have taken place in the last three decades of the twentieth century are an entirely important development in human history. Some observer has remarked that there have been more changes in the first half of the twentieth century than in the past ten thousand years but more changes have been brought in the past 20-25 years than in the first half of this century. This is not a question of measuring and weighing differences but the major fact is that change is coming very fast and it would be better if we dealt with it equally fast and we aligned ourselves with it. We cannot afford to lag behind and we have to link ourselves with the process of change after fully grasping it. This is a big challenge before us today.

The developed countries have begun using new capabilities rather than depend on industries which use energy and effort. These industries include several types of electronic machines, computers, semi-conductors and fibre-optics, satellites and space flights, chemicals based on mineral oils, new environmental and plastics industries all of which need trained and skilled workers. Although in some of the wealthy nations the old technologies and factories running on

fuel are not totally closed, particularly those of military and economic value, even so these industries are being run with the help of fewer workers and with better use of energy. More progressive technologies than those used before are now being employed.

Some people believe that this should not be interpreted as a big step in the direction of industrial progress. They are of the view that a new phase is taking place. This phase is known as a phase of information, electronics age, space age, age of technology and so on. All this would lead us to believe that newer phases are coming up before us. Whether the names given to the new phases are correct or not, it is clear that the types of the phases are changing, their methods are changing and the influence they exercise on human life are also changing. One cannot be sure of the changes which might still occur in the world system and which civilizations would take the place of the civilizations that we have known.

Recently when I was in the United States, our Indian scientists who are working in big laboratories there met me and drew a picture of the future of the world, not too distant a future. I was, indeed, proud as an Indian of these scientists but as the Prime Minister of India I was made to think where we were and what were the indications. We have to think about it, where we stand today and where the world is heading. It seems there is no comparison between the two. We should, therefore, take into account our position while considering these changes, improve it with unity and with our social experience. We ought to have the knowledge of how to apply our minds on these issues.

Some outline of this emerging world order appears before us with its three specialities. A new communication system is taking shape. The financial system of the world is becoming global in an extraordinary manner. Globalisation is taking place. As a result of these two changes there is a big change in the economic strength and in the social and political relations. The new communications

inventions have reduced distances in such a manner that the world has become a small town. It is highly intriguing that what we in India had said five thousand years ago, viz. the world was a family, is now being inquired into and the people are reaching the same conclusion that the world is a small place. The world was small in the past and is small today. Earlier people thought the world was big and now a correct assessment is being made. That is the only difference. The presence of communication satellites in the space ensures that national frontiers are no obstruction in sending information and pictures abroad.

Can the spread of thought be thwarted ? It is necessary to discuss this here. While we emphasise the cultural invasion aspect more than necessary, we should remember that the new information order is very effective and we can broadcast information and statistics with its help which is very essential for our economic progress. In the earlier period, economic relations with one's neighbours were not given much importance. The relations were limited to sending finished goods or raw materials from one country to another. The speciality of the new global economy is that not only is there a global market but there is a global communication system also. Goods are being manufactured today by going across the national frontiers. Industrial organisations are coming up fast in big numbers in the global economy which are increasing their activities. They are called multinationals and while there are complaints against them they are praised too.

The third part of the global economy is the regular structure of banks and financial institutions which provide services without which the production and marketing of goods on a global scale is not possible. As a result of the coming together of the three parts of the new global economy, capital and technology are going from one country into another very fast and are being made applicable. It should be mentioned here that technology is not crossing the frontiers fast enough. Where technology has to come out of those

countries where it is used as a capital this is particularly so. In countries like ours this does not happen because our technology and whatever know-how we have goes out of the country very easily. People from abroad come here and take away whatever we have by paying a small amount. Nothing remains with us and when it is returned to us we pay ten times, twenty times.

The time has come for us to investigate whatever we have, gifted to us by nature and God, our capital and our property and we should protect our interests fully. So far this has not happened in our country although it is a matter of basic interest to us. For whenever we have to buy something like technology from abroad we have to pay for it through our nose and those exporting countries also consider whom they would sell it and whom not. They consider who is their friend and who is not, who must be helped to advance and who should not be. All these games are played like in chess and we become its victims.

India attained independence in this important century at a time when industrialisation was at its height. It is no wonder that we then decided to use science and technology for our economic advancement and as the biggest asset in progress. As you know, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru set up our steel industry in the public sector and laid a foundation which is proving very useful to us today. Many people were then confused why such a big industry was needed here. Some people even questioned the need for steel. The advanced countries were not willing to give us the technology and said they would rather sell steel to us, not set up a steel mill here. First of all, the Soviet Union gave us the Bhilai Steel Plant and when this started others also followed suit. This then became a caravan. Technology is not thus easily available but once it starts coming in and others see the chance to make money and get some advantage everyone comes in, one after the other. We are grateful to those who started the process because others also walked in after them and, in one word, the infrastructure we have created is matchless in the developing

nations. In a crucial period we adopted a model for industrialisation in which coal, textiles, and railways and similar traditional industries were chosen for investment while steel, heavy machinery, electrical goods, chemicals and chemical fertilizers, and machines for such industries were also set up. Later, consumer goods industries making essential requirements also made progress. This policy helped to a great extent in developing the basic structure and in establishing an industrial base.

What we have achieved in the past three years is the freeing of the regime of controls and march in step with the global economy. I have spoken about it earlier also. This is not a new thing. We had a mixed economy earlier also and we are trying to meet the needs of today by changing the mixture of the mixed economy. The global system has got so mixed up with the national structure that we cannot remain apart from it. If we did so, the system would get blasted. We have to link ourselves with the system that prevails today. We have not linked ourselves in a manner where we imitate anyone. This must be clearly understood that we have not imitated anyone in these three years. We did not borrow any model, rather we created our own model. In this model, the big industries which involved an investment of Rs. five to ten thousand crore had to be taken care of earlier by the Government. We did that in the case of Bhilai as I mentioned.

But in doing so, we had to neglect education and the Government could not devote as much attention to health as it should have, while the steel mills were set up, because we did not have enough resources to meet all the needs. We lagged behind in human resource development. Of course, what was done was essential because if we did not develop the steel mills, other big industries, special kinds of fertilizers, we would have starved. The priorities of those times were the right ones, although some of the essential aspects for our progress lagged behind. In the past three years we have followed the policy that projects involving an investment of Rs 5,000 crore or

more are no longer being taken up by the Government. We tell others, the foreign investors, to come in and invest their money and take away desirable profits and help the country.

Whatever money we have, from tax collections, is now free in the sense that it is not being used for investment in those big projects. We use it for children's welfare, for the people, for setting up schools, building roads, hospitals, and we are doing it already. In the Eighth Plan we have a provision of Rs. 30,000 crore for rural development which never happened before. The earlier Plan had provided only a fourth of the amount and we have thus raised the provision for village development four times. We could do it because we found a friend to finance the big industries. Or we are trying to induce him to come in. We did away with the regulations and controls of the earlier order, the license and permit raj, and tried to give them a clean slate to write upon.

This is satisfactory in a way and not so satisfactory in a complete sense. It takes time to complete it. This is a task which gets done gradually, not overnight. But now whatever we have planned we have been able to carry out. That is why I maintain that we have not borrowed anybody's model and it is our own model, an Indian model. Anybody following another method or trying it would be cut off from the global system which is emerging. You can see clearly that if you try to create a wall around you, you may not succeed in creating it and in remaining aloof, you would get left behind while the world marches on. We do not want it. Ours is a big country with a population of 90 crores of people. We have to think about its problems. When we think of them, we realise that we cannot live if we cut ourselves off from the world. If we wanted it, we would suffer heavily.

We have entered the globalisation process as a partner, not as a campfollower of someone. We are in it as equal partners. We are not there as anybody's attendant. India is a vast country and it is not

possible for it to become anyone's attendant, anyone's campfollower. We cannot go and sit in someone's lap. Whose lap is so big which can accommodate India? We have to stand on our own feet. We have to frame our policy according to our situation and that is what we are trying to do. Some people tell us we are running fast while others say we are walking still in a leisurely fashion like members of a wedding party. There is some justification for both points of view, but the real justification is that we are neither running too fast nor indulging in a wedding party-style leisurely walk so that we remain where we are. We follow the speed which is possible for us.

What is a possible speed? There can be different views but not totally contradictory. There could be some difference of opinion within a certain range, not outside it. This is our speciality. This is part of the policy reorientation carried out by us in the past three years. Everyone accepts that there is a big number of scientists and technologists in India. But what is more important is that we should be accepted as a major centre of knowledge. But this is not happening. Perhaps you might know that our university degrees are not recognised in several developing countries too. Leave aside the developed countries. This is not a matter of pride for us. I am speaking in a university and I wish to remind you of it. We are a country which has scores of universities but their degrees have no recognition outside. What is this education for then?

We have to think hard about our education, about the system we have adopted for us. This has to be done by the University Grants Commission (UGC) and others. The UGC at least looks after the universities but who looks after the primary schools? In a tribal village does the primary school have the essential things or not, does anyone go there to teach or not, some attention has to be paid and it is hoped that after the coming in of Panchayati Raj in the villages more attention would be paid. If that happens you would find that drop-out itself would disappear. Instead you would have to build a new classroom every year to cope up with the rising population.

This is quite clear but so far it has not happened. For lack of funds extra classrooms are not built. Instead you have sixty boys to a class instead of thirty. Sixty becomes ninety or a hundred. Then there is no teaching and it becomes a farce.

We have to pay attention to these things. Institutions are coming up in the villages for this purpose at the grass roots and some money is being provided which used to be spent on big projects earlier. We have taken the first steps in all these departments, like electronics and computers, space research and oceanography. In these areas, we are one of the three or four countries in the world, so much progress we have made. Then there is bioscience and technology and research in special genetic engineering. I wish to make a special mention about genetic engineering. Our population is increasing despite our efforts. It is going up at such a rate that along with it we have to step up our food production and how far will it be possible? This big question is confronting us. The old methods of increasing production served us well in the Green Revolution in which our farmers played a big part in the past 40 or 50 years. Now in spite of that, we have to take recourse to technology if we have to raise our output of grains twice the present level or even one and a half times.

According to my rough calculations, we will have to step up our food output twice in the next 50 or 60 years. Is it possible? Not by the old methods. We will then have to take shelter under genetic engineering which is of much help in this context. This technology is not easily available to us and it costs a lot of money. Our researchers will thus have to apply their minds more to it. Research can be on any subject and any department but it should be carried on a topic which is relevant to you and which is of interest to you. If we do not have the funds to buy the technology we have to be selective and select only those topics which are relevant. If proper arrangements are made and we can make the research successful, progress can be ensured and results can be achieved soon.

Here I wish to mention a thing which is connected with the total effects of the global system. Some people fear that close contacts with other countries would result in our own cultural structure being damaged. In this country, at one time people used to think that those who crossed the sea to go abroad would be corrupted and if a man wanted to return to his fold he would have to undergo such a big penance that he would not go at all. The situation today is completely changed. Many thousands of our men, scientists, doctors and others have gone abroad and have been working there, solving the problems of those countries. One wishes they would solve our own problems and we would be able to take them back. Then our problems would be solved. Rajivji used to tell us that this should not be treated as a brain drain. If our scientist goes abroad and learns something and sees new inventions which he cannot see with his own eyes in India he is an asset for us. If he returns to India, we should make full use of him for this country. Can you do it or not? You can take it that he is prepared to return. Many people came to me and told me they are prepared to come back. We do not want big salaries, only facilities, they said. Give us the facilities and the miracles we are performing here would be performed in India, even more so.

But we do not have the required capacity for it to absorb their talents. We have to increase it. So it is not a matter of merely stepping up the production or increasing the population. There are several other things which we call subsidiary. These have to be increased and a new infrastructure has to be created. The sign of a strong economy is what is being done to find the right solutions. I was extremely happy to learn that all your courses are employment-oriented. There is no need to run about here and there for finding a job after getting a degree. Once you get the degree there is an assurance of getting a job within two or three months. If other institutions work likewise, the 90 crores of our population which has become a burden can take us to dizzy heights.

I wish to express my support for your efforts and your love of details which is very essential for any institution, a university or a primary school. We have a proverb, 'what means will you use, who will do it?' This will not do. You have to make full calculation in advance, what you wish to achieve and how you will achieve it. I am grateful to the administrators of the university who made it possible for me to come here and address you so that I could express some of my views before you. This is a unique opportunity which one gets rarely. We get a chance to talk to somebody or the other everyday, but such occasions are not easily available. My thanks and my good wishes to the students, my congratulations to them. I wish them a purposeful life.

Youth—the Agents of Change

WE HAVE ASSEMBLED here today to honour one of the greatest sons of India who embraced death in the prime of his life to uphold unity and integrity. Shri Rajiv Gandhi appeared in forefront like a meteor with a brilliant illuminating light. He left as suddenly as he had appeared, leaving behind the new insights and the new paths he had shown us. With his dynamic vision and concrete and quick action programmes, he injected a new energy into the system. He created the National Missions in critical areas of development to overcome hurdles. By being constantly reminded by him of the challenges of the 21st century and we all remember how he had zeroed in on the next century and the tasks and the challenges of the next century in almost every speech that he made. We and the people were compelled to look up and look forward.

He was so compelling in his exhortations, so sincere in his explaining things to us that we actually became a part of the process of looking into the future and this became something like a second nature with all the youth of the country and they were enthused to take part in all his programmes with that vision in view.

Rajivji's *Sadbhavna Padayatras* will always be remembered by all those who witnessed and participated in them. No nation on earth has developed by ill-will or hatred. This was a bottomline which really inspired him and he inspired all of us. Because it is just not possible by any nation to make any progress whatsoever unless there is cohesion, unless there is understanding, unless there is goodwill among its people. We are able to see the consequences of ill-will today as we stand here, as we look around in many corners of the world where even the UN forces are not able to restore order because the basic goodwill is missing. Something had happened which has set man against man and therefore the basic goodwill that needs to be a nation, that is the real thing which Rajivji expounded both by word and deed. And all the *yatras* that he undertook, many of us have seen them, many of us have also witnessed the enthusiasm with which the people participated in those *padayatras*. Therefore, I feel that he hit the real chord, the chord of goodwill among the people, in the hearts of the people and that is why he succeeded so eminently in the *yatras* and also in creating the goodwill, the *Sadbhavna*, among the people.

None had greater faith in the youth and higher expectations of them than Rajivji. He sincerely believed that it is the youth which can bring about the change in the country. To harness the abundant energy and creativity of the youth, he created the Department of Youth Affairs as an independent department. This helped in focusing attention on issues concerning youth. And the most important thing of all which a Prime Minister could do, he did perhaps as an example to the Prime Ministers who were to come after him. The youth programmes had only about Rs. 20 crore

in one plan, all the five years, all the 25 States, all the programmes were to get the paltry sum of 20 crores. I have not come across any other Prime Minister or any other example where overnight the provision for a particular programme became ten times between one Plan and another; from 20 crores he straightaway raised it to 200 crores and we had the good fortune of spending in the HRD of those days, these 200 crores very meaningfully by getting the infrastructure of sports in many parts of the country which would have taken several decades at the rate at which the programme was progressing earlier. And this is one of the most important, most significant jumps that a country could achieve from Plan to Plan. This will always be remembered by the ministry concerned as also the youth of the country who know about it and even then today we find that the activities have spread so much that we have to further raise the provisions. We are not able to raise it ten times as he did but we would certainly like to raise it suitably so that the activities do not lag behind and we are taking care of that.

We continue to implement the agenda he set for the nation with sincerity and vigour. I have said this many times not just as a formal tribute but as a matter of fact, that what he set as the agenda for the nation was so comprehensive, so complete that what we are doing today is just to continue that programme. Take that programme up and go ahead. We have neither the time nor the energy to go beyond that programme, the programme was so comprehensive. And to think of it, if you analyse the programme, you will find that its comprehensiveness is really astounding, there is nothing which he has left out. You analyse this and you will come to this conclusion. I have said this many times and I repeat this today that what we are doing as the successive Government, at least of the same party, what he did and what he prescribed as the programme of the nation is what we are following.

Early in the morning today thousands of young men and women had assembled at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium to par-

ticipate in the Sadbhavna Run. Now this also he started and this is going on with great enthusiasm shown by the youth. What is this run? When it was first introduced? People did not know what it was? Even today, perhaps people think that it is just a kind of activity which doesn't have a meaning. What I would like to say because we have discussed this at the time of the first run which started near the Boat Club. We said, we came to this conclusion, we discussed it and said what we can do symbolically to show that the nation is on the march, on the forward march. What can we do to show that the youth are taking part in it? Now think of these things and imagine a programme, you will find that the simplest and the best would be that the youth everywhere in the country would run, run forward, maybe five minutes, maybe ten minutes, maybe some people who can run faster would run to a longer distance. They do it and they did it in this first run, I remember. This is the symbolic representation of the youth of the country marching forward with speed and enthusiasm. This has continued over the years and I am glad that it also happened this morning, with equal enthusiasm on the part of those who participated. We have decided to form a committee on national youth programme chaired by the Prime Minister with the representatives of national political parties, State governments, sports persons, youth leaders and youth belonging to minority communities. I have seen to it that all shades of opinion are represented. I have called a meeting of this committee day after tomorrow and I am sure this will give us another opportunity to synergise our efforts to promote youth programmes.

Talking about youth programmes, it is not that only the Department of Youth Affairs is running programmes for youth. In many of the other programmes also the focus is on youth. Take TRYSEM for instance. This is a part of the rural development programme but the main beneficiary is the youth. Likewise, I would not like to list out all the programmes. They are spread over all the ministries but ultimate beneficiaries are the youth of the country and that is how they have been conceived.

Today, we see momentous changes taking place in the country. I am referring to an era of economic liberalisation that we have ushered in. I think the basic thrust in the new environment should be to create self employment opportunities and this is what we are trying to do by this massive induction of money from the Planning Commission from the Government of India, straight into the villages of the country. Most of the programmes are meant to give employment and self employment to the people there. The money which is being pumped in today, is perhaps unprecedented and they will have to do a lot of home work at the district level, at the lower level, at the Panchayat level in order to be able to spend this money meaningfully and not allowing it to be wasted.

Another important area is the dissemination of correct information. Department of Youth Affairs should also undertake programmes to make the youth aware of the new opportunities and I would suggest that the vocational guidance centres can be opened in as many districts as possible and as soon as possible. Both the NSS and the Nehru Yuvak Kendra Sangathan can play a very important role in this. We will have some models prepared for this kind of centres and if we can take up these programmes of vocational guidance at the district levels, I am sure, it will be extremely useful for the youth of the country.

On the last National Youth Day, I had announced the launching of the National Youth Festival. I am happy that preparations have been made and in most of the States, the block level festivals would start next month. What is more heartening is that during the last Youth Minister's Conference in April, the State governments showed tremendous enthusiasm and agreed to take responsibilities of organising the festivals upto the State level themselves. I urge all State governments to make the Festival a grand success and I also expect the youth of the country, youth in all the States, districts and everywhere to make this a great success because we know that Rajivji had started the festivals, the chain of festivals that we

had. Indiraji had started them but Rajivji went ahead and perfected these festivals between India and other countries. He himself inaugurated many of them. I had the privilege of doing this in some other countries. They had even come spilled over into our regime because my first visit to Germany was to inaugurate the India-Germany Festival—the cultural festivals. We have one internal festival, festival within the country which is called ‘Apna Utsav’. Because everybody is in it and that is why it is called, ‘our festival’. So these festivals would also bring together the spirit of oneness in the country, the spirit of oneness of whole of humanity when they take place between countries. I remember of the reports of the impact that Indian festivals had in the then Soviet Union. People were dancing in almost every village wherever our people went, our troupes went. It was not just a theatre or something being made use of. They were all on the streets. Music, dance—they were all doing it together and, this kind of response was unprecedented in the Soviet Union and also in India. And when they came here, we responded with equal enthusiasm as many of you may remember. The quality of our human resources is second to none in the world and the time has come to make the fullest use of this rich potential in the context of rapidly changing economic order.

The youth will have to play a significant role not only as partners and participants in development but also as agents of change and communicators. This is extremely important to note. The youth are not meant to ditto the past. What the others did in the past is easy to pick up and say we are continuing it. The youth is really facing the challenge of innovation. Otherwise you will stagnate, the country will stagnate. What we should avoid more than anything else is stagnation and therefore be the agent of change and that agent of change is the youth of the country and none else.

So on this occasion, I would like to exhort the youth of the country to realise this that they are not only the torch bearers of

our culture and our past traditions but also the agents of change. Without change no nation can move forward. And therefore, this double responsibility, this dual responsibility is something which the youth has to undertake and understand.

Musicians Weave People into Sentiment of Goodwill

WE ARE CELEBRATING today the fiftieth birth anniversary of Rajivji in his absence. But we feel that he is somehow with us, he is not away from us and we go forward in that belief. The concept of Sadbhavana (goodwill) was given to us by Rajivji. I believe it was not just a matter of living together, but something deeper. The concept gives rise to several other ideas and they together prevail over society and even change it. They establish a new set of values and change society. Sadbhavana is at the root of it all. They emanate from it.

Rajivji is not with us but we feel that we should make arrangements for spreading his message so that it continues to inspire the generations to come in this country, in the spirit of 'leaves, flowers, fruits and water' (as the *Bhagavad Gita* says). This gave birth to the idea that a 'Sadbhavana Award' be instituted. This is the type of award that the emperors of yore or the kings would have been giving. This is an award which the people admire, and they also believe that the recipient is deserving of adoration, capable of honouring.

You would recall that the first award was given by us to Mother Teresa. There is hardly any need to explain to you the importance

of Mother Teresa. She is well-known throughout the world. She has won the Nobel Prize and is working with the poor in this country even today. She could not personally be present to receive the award because she was taken ill. The message she sent us while accepting the award gives us much to learn if we read it carefully. We can learn a great deal from the spirit of service which oozed out of it.

Since the Vice President is a member of the Award Committee, Soniaji is a member, we all are in it, we thought of something which unites the people. It is not a matter of merely delivering speeches. It must be something which can change society. It must be something which can bring about a transformation in social thinking. Last year's award was given on the basis of service, humanitarian services rendered by man to man, without any distinction. For this year's award we thought the theme should be something which unites everyone. Many of you must have seen, when Yehudi Menuhin and Pandit Ravishankar perform together in a *jugalbandi*. People from all over the world who are present there begin to sway. Maybe, all of them do not go into the depth of what is being performed and what it means, but they do sway, something which I have seen with my own eyes twice or thrice. Music is such a thing in which there is no distinction. The listener gets carried away and man is united with man.

When the child cries, the mother sings a lullaby. The child is silenced. She has not learnt it from some *ustad* but the song has strength which awakens the inner strength of the child and it quietens the child, because it makes the child forget the pain it may be undergoing. We know it also that even animals are influenced by it. When Shri Krishna played on the flute the cows used to come running to him. All that is written in our *Bhagavat Purana* and described in the Krishna Leelas. Every child in this country knows about it.

The serpent sways when the snake-charmer plays on the *been*. As the *been* produces its notes the serpent begins to sway. Then what

to say of people like us? Whether we know it or not we are carried away by the music and then the emotions merge into a single permanent sentiment. This is the power of music. I would take two minutes of your time to relate an old experience of mine of twentyfive or thirty years ago. We were then in Hyderabad and a ministerial colleague of ours, Raja Sahib, was getting his daughter married in Madras. He had a palace there which still exists and he had invited all of us there. Everything was fine when the marriage date was fixed. Just two or four days before the wedding was to take place the anti-Hindi agitation began in Tamil Nadu and some people immolated themselves. At first we were also afraid but we decided to go to the wedding because Raja Sahib was our colleague and we had to go there.

He had arranged a special programme at the wedding which was fixed up one or two months in advance, a Kathak dance recital by Birju Maharaj which was to be accompanied by so much of Hindi literature while there in Madras and in the State of Tamil Nadu this anti-Hindi agitation was in progress. Whether we said it or not we had decided not to go back to Hyderabad without attending the wedding. I could not believe my eyes, even today I am not able to believe that sight. Some fifty thousand people had assembled in that big compound in which Birju Maharaj was to dance. We did not know what those people had carried with them, stones, petrol, or other missiles. But when the dance and song began we knew they had not brought anything with them. They began to dance in the streets when Birju Maharaj's Kathak dance began. There was no trace of the anti-Hindi agitation.

This is my own experience to which I was an eye witness. I can never forget it. Such is the power of music. Who are the embodiments of that power? We have chosen Khan Sahib Ustad Bismillah Khan from among them. He belongs to Varanasi. That Varanasi where for centuries music, literature and arts have prospered. We say that music oozes out of one of the breasts of Mother Saraswati and out

of the other flows literature. One is sweet and the other represents thought, the essence of thought. They are both together. Pandit Omkarnath Thakur used to live in Varanasi and he combined the two. He set to music the great poem, 'Kamayani' by Jayshankar Prasad. What is the relationship between music and poetry that when you present a concept through music the tunes suddenly change. The strings of the instrument become the combination of tunes—the *Saptak*. When the Himalaya is described you get a feeling as though the great mountain range stands before you. Then a river is introduced and the tunes change and you feel a running stream is there before you.

The great musicians present before you the combination of sentence and meaning which is linked to music. Khan Sahib does it through his *Shahnai* which is indicative of the auspicious. Go to any small village—I am talking about myself and it would be so elsewhere too—*Shahnai* will be there on the occasion of marriage. There cannot be a marriage without the *Shahnai*. Khan Sahib has taken the instrument to great heights. He travelled around the world and he took part in *jugalbandis* as though he was engaged in a discussion of the meaning of ancient scriptures (*shastrarth*). He was victorious and he established the superiority of *Shahnai* in the world and proved that India also had something special, that India too had its great music.

Then we have this system under which certain *ragas* and *raginis* can be sung only at a certain time of the day or night. This has become part of our life. There is a proverb in Telugu and I do not know if the same thing exists in Hindi also. It goes like this, 'why are you singing *Bhupali* at the wrong time?' Who says it? A villager, who does not know music and does not know what *Bhupali* is. But he knows that the *Raga Bhupali* is sung at the *Brahma* period of early morning. So when someone does something untimely and says something irrelevant he is stopped and asked why he is singing a *Bhupali* at the wrong time. So, even in the day-to-day conversation

of the people this has found a place. Music has entered the proverbs and our culture and life. This is our great wealth. It is incomparable and we must not lose it. It must not suffer diminution as, indeed, it may be taking place.

I find that in many institutions of music proper coaching is conducted and in the rest it is nominal. So when will another Bismillah Khan come out and when will he be trained? It is not a small matter. After years of dedication can a great musician be trained, great people like the peaks of our Himalaya mountain. There are only a few, four or five peaks, not scores, not hundreds. Great musicians are like that, a few emerge after years of dedicated pursuit of music. They do not become great musicians because of favours conferred by someone. It is not a jugglery of notes but it is something which comes out when the artist rises above the tunes and the musical notes. It is like a new note manifesting itself when two notes are played simultaneously. Music is a gift of God. It is born of dedication and application on the part of the artist and the grace of God. Our art of music is not a physical exercise; it is born itself.

If in spite of all these things, if the singer does not have a good voice he would not attain fame. All his art and all the technique he has mastered would fail to attract the audience if he does not have a good voice. There are artists like that and there are musicians who with the instruments we know in India can change the whole world and weave all the people into one sentiment of goodwill as though all the people were carried away in their music. Nobody cares who is what when they perform because they can create a condition, a situation an atmosphere with their music. We honour him (Bismillah Khan), we bow to him, and thank him that he accepted the award we are conferring on him. He has placed before you proof of what a great son of India can do. The one who has conquered the world and put the seal of victory on his performance abroad is now going to accept our award named after Rajiv Gandhi. It is a great thing for us. I thank him once again.

I have to make an announcement for which I think this is a very appropriate occasion. The Constitution of India provides that the States will take steps to organise Village Panchayats and endow them with such power and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function effectively as units of self-government. This important provision of the Constitution was given its real meaning only when the late Shri Rajiv Gandhi declared, "We are starting out together on a great adventure of democracy and development at the grass roots. Our democracy cannot be strong unless democracy in the villages is strong. We cannot have real development in the country unless those in the villages are made responsible for development in the villages and the people who live in the villages are involved in their development."

It gives me immense satisfaction that we have been able to translate his vision into reality with the enactment of the Constitution 73rd Amendment which came into force on 24 April 1993. In pursuance of this all the State and Union Territory governments have also either amended their existing legislation or enacted new legislation within the stipulated period and the legal framework came into being on 23 April 1994.

Now the process of actually constituting Panchayats through the electoral process has also begun and has even been completed in some States. I am confident that by the end of the year the Panchayati Raj system would have been established throughout the country. This will usher in a new era of decentralisation and direct involvement of the people in governance at the grass roots.

In order to motivate the different levels of these Panchayati Raj institutions and provide incentives for excellence I am happy to announce the institution of the Rajiv Gandhi National Awards for Panchayati Raj in memory of our late Prime Minister. The Rajiv Gandhi Memorial Gold Trophy will be awarded to the State which has the best functioning Panchayats in all respects. A cash award of

Rupees one crore will be given to the best functioning Zila Parishad. Awards of Rs.50 lakh each will be given to the two best functioning intermediate level Panchayats and awards of Rupees ten lakh each will be given to the five best functioning Gram Panchayats. In addition, the best voluntary organisation engaged in Panchayati Raj activities would also be given an award of Rupees ten lakh.

Taking Education to Doorsteps

I AM, INDEED, very happy to be associated with this function. Distance education has been one of the most difficult subjects which we have undertaken, most intricate tasks that we have started in this country. I am not sure whether the credentials of distance education have been finally and definitively established even now, because I know for certain that there are some people, some educationists, who think that this cannot, really, compare with education proper. It was also said that we were debating on the question of distance education, that distance education and the open university system are there as cheaper alternatives. Because we do not have money, we do not go in for buildings everywhere, we cannot have colleges functioning everywhere, therefore it was said that the open university system was started. I tried to go into this as the person incharge of education for a long time and I find that all these are based on fallacy.

Distance education is not the cheap kind of education that it is said to be. It is education which is even more sophisticated,

more difficult to achieve than ordinary, regular kind of education, orthodox kind of education. I found that the large number of students who are spread all over the State or the country, as the case may be, find it sometimes baffling, how they can cope with this learning that is being imparted to them from a distance through several media, through several gadgets and whether it is possible for them to understand the subjects as thoroughly as it is possible in regular education.

We have found however, after going into the experience of some other countries like Thailand, England, Canada, that this is as good and effective an education as any, if not better and therefore the credentials I think have now been established after few years. It is good that Andhra Pradesh which has had the distinction of starting many schemes first in the country has also started this. It was as uncertain as it was started then, as it was anywhere in any other State when it was started. For instance we started the junior colleges, we found that the experiment of junior colleges has its pluses and minuses but we were the first to start it anyway. So I think the experience of this University is going to be very valuable in the organisation of other universities or other institutions of like-nature with the same objectives and I am sure in that way, we can call this institution a pioneering institution. Pioneering is not always the most successful, because, it is they, the pioneers who come across all the difficulties first. They are pioneers in the sense, that they start an institution and also face all the first failures and first difficulties of the institution, hurdles of the institution. They find ways which other copy or take over from them and therefore to be the second or third or the fourth university is always easier than to be the first. From that point of view, I am sure, that this University has something to offer, by way of advice, by way of guidance, by way of sharing of its own experience with other universities or intending institutions.

I would like to stress the point, that the product of the University is the real litmus test. I am impressed by your building,

because, I had never thought, that an open university would need such a big building. For the first time, I understood, that you need it. But I was thinking, that it is not the building, but what happens in the building, what goes on in the building, in the precincts of the building, the rooms of the building that is more important. I have no way of checking the quality of your products, but I hope that someone is checking, someone is keeping track of the quality of these products. Please do not allow the open university system, the distance education system to languish behind and get a bad name for the system itself.

I have a feeling that there is much more to do than is being done in this field. I have been thinking about the distance education as system, not only to reach everybody, but to reach everybody equally and effectively, equally with the same effect and with the same amount of knowledge being imparted. So I would like to know, if there is anyone doing research in distance education as such. When we started the Central Open University, Prof. Ram Reddy was there. He told us that, in the first year, he wanted the people and the students to know what is distance education. He wanted the students to know what exactly are they receiving, what exactly they are doing, what exactly they are being made to do.

So distance education itself was one of the subjects which he had chosen. I remember it very well. I was the Minister concerned at that time and it is good that what is being imparted is also coupled with what is the imparting procedure, the system itself, and how does it get imparted to the students. This is something which is quite encouraging, and I would like to congratulate those who have been doing this work. But as I said, I would not be satisfied with the effectiveness of the open university system or the distance education system before I am told that the products of this university have competed well, have been found to be even superior to the products of the other universities and whatever snobbery one comes

across, among educationists is a myth. I would like to know from you, from Prof. Ram Reddy, Basheeruddin Saab and the others, who have been working on this system, to tell me that they have found it equally effective.

It is not every professor that can run an open university system. It is not every teacher that can teach in the open university system. They also have to have special skills, the use of electronic media, the use of different gadgets, the use of other methods which have certain limitations as a method, but combined with the other methods make the whole system work, make the whole system more effective, that is the kind of integration of the methods that is much more important than any one method itself. Therefore, this also is one of the research fields, fields in which we have to go on committing mistakes if you will but perfect the method as far as possible as you go along. This I think is to be borne in mind. I have great admiration for those who are the pioneers in this field because once it is established it is going to solve many problems of education in this country.

We have problem at the primary level, we have problem at the secondary level, we have problem at the tertiary level, all levels bristle with problems. At the primary level, we all know the drop-out difficulty and how we have to make up by adult education after having allowed the child to become an adult in illiteracy and then you go on trying to correct it, then something happens which is successful, something happens which is not successful and therefore the whole system gets a kind of mixed reputation. I have known many leaders who have been colleagues in the Central Government, my own colleagues, who have said that all these methods of adult education etc. are simply a waste of money. Now we have to prove to them. I was in the Human Resource Development Ministry at that time. We had to prove by all possible methods and persuasions that this is not so. I am not sure whether they are fully convinced but one has to demonstrate, one has to

demonstrate to be able to carry conviction to anyone who doubts the efficacy of the system.

The orthodoxy which you find in the field of education is extremely strong, may be stronger than any other field. They will never look at you unless you prove to them that you are better than them. That is where the challenge comes. I want this challenge to be accepted by the open university system. It should prove itself, it should prove to the whole world except a few sceptics, that this is equally effective.

I am happy to be able to commend the foresight of educationists in Andhra Pradesh as well as the State Government here who set up the B. R. Ambedkar Open University as far back as in 1982. But the preparation had been done, studies had been made even before 1982. In fact, the studies about the open university system as a system, the curiosity about the system, the desire to learn about the system, to examine it, to get into details, all this was done in Andhra Pradesh even before 1982. 1982 was the culmination of all these efforts, the culmination of all these trials and tribulations and because it was the first university, it has a first to its credit, but to the credit of Andhra Pradesh goes the entire hard-work that went into the making of an open university. Though I remember those days, I feel that some hard-work which was put in, has been rewarded properly. I wish the students of this university not in Hyderabad alone but in the entire State of Andhra Pradesh, in villages, in municipalities, in districts wherever they are, all success that is due to them, that they deserve. The success that is due to a system which has just been accepted but at the same time which has not gone into stagnation.

This is one of the wonderful things about open university that it will never go into stagnation. Its variety, its quest for knowledge, quest for better methods will always remain alive and only if that happens, only if that lively interest in the system itself

is kept up, will the system succeed. I would like to give this as a bit of advice to those in charge of the universities not to get contented with anything that you have already done. The kind of quest that you should pursue all the time is something which becomes a high water mark of your excellence, and that is the real secret of any institution of excellence. I hope this is being done, but I have no way of finding out. If someone can tell me after a comparative study of the systems that this system has come to stay because it has proved its worth more than what any system could be expected to prove, then I would be satisfied. Until then I will admire your building, I will admire what you have been doing, the effort that you are doing, but I will not be able to be satisfied that whatever you have been doing here is worth doing and will remain an effort at excellence which every educational institution should be.

Reinterpretation of Tradition Essential

I DEEM IT my good fortune that I got this opportunity to come here on the occasion of this assembly of learned men. As we go forward we come into contact with many traditions. But the more we try to learn about other traditions the more we are convinced about the excellence of our own. When we compare both and find out what is happening in other parts of the world we come to the conclusion, at least I do, that there is hardly anything to compare with the excellence of our Indian tradition.

This is not a matter of being partial, but of comparison. The other traditions have what is called imperialism. If you wish to know

about something, the best way is to analyse it, break it down into parts and then find out what the parts contain. Our tradition is such that even when the parts are broken down there is still an integrated outlook which is bigger than the view obtained by putting the pieces together. The sum is more than the aggregate of the parts. Just as when you put together the eyes, ears, legs and other parts together you still do not breathe life into the body. Thus it is a matter of life. When a renowned Vaidya feels someone's pulse he does not merely look at it but tries to find out the deficiencies that may exist in different limbs of the body. In the other traditions, the affected part is cut open.

We have an integrated outlook which places before you the meaning of life. We believe in our system and those in the other systems also know it. They realise that by analysing the parts they do not get an integrated picture. For an integrated picture you have to grasp the whole situation and you need a spirit of dedicated pursuit to reach that stage. That calls for study. They would then accept that a devoted pursuit of that power is necessary if they have to be helped to take an integrated picture and a coordinated view.

All of you are engaged in that pursuit for decades and it is difficult to say how long that has gone on. It does not behove me to make any presentation of awards to you. Still, there is an order and I have been reminded that I have been awarding prizes and honours to people who are more learned than me on such occasions.

In our country, we try to keep economic gain and sexual desire under restraint. When I visit another country I find that the talk about money is a recurring theme. Nothing else seems to be talked about. It appears as though there was a current in which other elements, all our desires get merged. In our tradition, however, the river of economic gain and sex flows bounded on both sides by the sentiments of liberation (*moksha*) and righteousness. This is the thinking of a great nation in which there is human endeavour on both sides but

there are two banks between which the rivers of life flows. In the advanced countries, this kind of restraint does not obtain. They have, on the other hand, what is called specialisation so that the economist would talk endlessly as though there is nothing beyond economic matters.

We, on the contrary, have a coordinated approach and outlook and thought. This is our speciality. You can find the balanced outlook also in the countries where Buddhism has spread and where the Eastern civilization is prevalent. In India, however, it is most widely prevalent. I feel that what we have in our civilization and tradition which has come down right to the present generation should be preserved by whatever means at your disposal. It is essential that someone should take the responsibility to ensure that it is not lost or destroyed. Our great teachers undertook the responsibility of preserving this knowledge and tradition and they engaged themselves in analysing and studying them. The Indian Government is also taking some steps, the Human Resource Development Ministry has done much work and the States have also done their part. But it is not my claim that the government has done a lot in this area. Government work is after all work of its own kind and when a minister is replaced everything changes. There is, therefore, so much you have to do. Of course, those in the government, whether at the Centre or the States, are imbued with the Indian tradition. This is a symbolic way of saying and the rest has to be done by you.

We do not think that our *Shastras* (sacred scriptures and ancient sciences) are lifeless objects. It would not do to keep them as a museum piece and forget about them. The *Shastras* are a living entity of which there are different aspects. People like you alone can conduct research on them in these changing times, see how they can be applied in today's circumstances and analyse them from this standpoint. Tradition does not end today because otherwise it would cease to be a tradition. Even after five hundred years if that tradition

is still going on it deserves to be called a tradition. But, in order to preserve it, the tradition must be reinterpreted. The purpose of reinterpretation is to apply it in today's circumstances. We know that the *Dharmashastras* are dynamic and what Manu wrote has been changing and is today the 'Hindu Code'.

When you compare one with the other you would know that many things have changed. What our society wants to see in force and the institutions like our Parliament and the legislatures in States, which reflect the will of the people, seek is a new interpretation and changes with a view to implementation in a particular way. The interpretation must be done accordingly. We try to follow Manu but the *Dharmashastra* does not remain static; it changes. In the changing circumstances, the ancient law changes, the sentence remains the same, the word is the same as before but the meaning and the interpretation change. There have been many interpretations in the past also; Yajnavalkya gave some interpretations and others gave their own, and we are interpreting it in a different manner.

Thus the aphorism has different forms and we see them in the light of the circumstances of time and place. What goes in Maharashtra does not prevail in Bengal which follows a different system. If we define it according to the needs of time and place so that it goes on changing and new interpretation is being done then our scriptures become vibrant with life. You people have been doing it always. I hope that in future too you would not make our scriptures lifeless and mere objects of worship but make a part of our life. That life is the life of the people, yours as well as mine, of the common people to whom they must try to reach out.

The people must also know what the scriptures contain. In the people's language there are so many valuable things, as in Sanskrit. The great men of the past brought whatever was there in Sanskrit within the reach of the people through their languages Mandalmishraji was just now referring to the popular saying: "With His grace the lame will cross mountains, the blind will see everything." That is

easily followed by everyone. If it is said in Sanskrit perhaps that will not be the case. We have thus wrought these truths in the people's languages so that they can reach the people also and there is great need for it. That would make life complete in all respects. What the learned men say would be taken by the great souls, saints and the social workers to the people. We look at the social order in its entirety and want the people to understand it too.

We had great men like Sushruta and what he and the great masters of music said has recently been rendered into English and it is becoming popular. We should thus tell the people what is part of our tradition. We should try to take to the people what is contained in our scientific lore and others would also benefit by it. The Government would certainly like to do its bit in this matter if it finds a learned man who could tell it how all this could be done and how this knowledge could be taken to the people. An institution has been in existence for work on the *Vedas* and Shri Vinay Joshi was engaged in this work. Now I do not know who is doing it. What Mandalmishraji is doing is also like building a bridge between the two.

I hope that the endeavour will be carried forward and when the need arises for it to be expanded we will all be ready to undertake it. The institutions of our great souls and the great teachers are also doing this work. Once before also, I had occasion to come here with Indiraji and I remember that very well. I hope that from now on this work will be carried on in the coming years and just like this people would sit together and conduct a review of the developments every year of the principles of the scriptures in the light of the conditions of today. This can lead to a better understanding.

Make Learning Joyful for Child

IT IS, INDEED, an honour to address this unique gathering which brings together representatives of different walks of life who can make a positive impact on our efforts for universalisation of elementary education. The far-sightedness of our leaders, Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Nehru during the freedom struggle resulted in the concretisation of socio-economic goals to be achieved after the attainment of freedom. Basic education is a valuable legacy of our freedom struggle.

By any measure, India has made great strides towards the goals of universal primary education and universal adult literacy since obtaining independence in 1947. Free and compulsory education for all children upto the age of 14 years is a Constitutional obligation for us. What has been accomplished in terms of literacy, spread of institutions, participation and equalisation of educational opportunities is spectacular, considering the very low base at which we started after independence. The literacy rate has nearly trebled since independence. Access to schooling has been substantially achieved at the primary stage with 95 per cent of the rural population having access to primary schools within one kilometer radius.

We have also made remarkable strides in the equalisation of educational opportunities. The opportunities available, particularly in the rural areas, have increased considerably. But still a lot needs to be done in removing the hiatus between the facilities available to a child in a city and to a child in a village.

We have in our National Policy on Education and its programme of action, an excellent framework for guiding the national effort.

This Policy is the outcome of the very special interest and vision of our late Prime Minister and leader, Shri Rajiv Gandhi. The Policy is based on an indepth analysis of the educational system and is path-breaking in several respects. It recognises the organic unity of early childhood education and primary schooling, non-formal education, adult education and post-literacy and lifelong continuing education. The Policy conceives elementary education as a dynamic process encompassing a wide variety of learning opportunities, laying stress on girls, out of school children and those belonging to disadvantaged groups.

While stressing school effectiveness, it seeks to address to the more difficult aspects of access to education of millions of children who are not the beneficiaries of the school system. To reach out to these millions it had postulated a large and systematic programme of non-formal education as an integral component of the strategy to achieve universalisation of elementary education. It articulated the necessity of mobilising the society, including NGOs and social activists, for the cause of education. It was thus a comprehensive Policy with vision and flexibility and laid special emphasis on social justice and equality in the field of education.

This is a point which generally is not appreciated. There is a difference between the Kothari Commission Report of 1968 and the policy which was accepted by Parliament in 1986. The present Policy of 1986 has social justice and equality of opportunities to all children in the country as the basic tenet. The Kothari Report, on the other hand, had the idea of taking education into the entire planning process. That was necessary in the early '60s and this has now become necessary because having put it in the Plans, not having been able to remove this hiatus, it has become imperative now, and this is why the difference between the two reports, depending on the difference between the conditions obtaining whence the reports came, needs to be noted.

The years since 1986, when the National Policy on Education was enunciated, have witnessed major interventions and innovations at all levels in the educational process. For instance, the Operation Blackboard was conceived for the improvement of primary schools and provision of support services. This is precisely the point I was making. We may have backward areas, we may have backward sections of society, but we cannot afford to have backward schools. There has to be some sort of similarity, equality in the opportunities available to the children everywhere in the country. The Operation Blackboard was supposed to meet, was intended to meet this specific need.

I have no idea about the latest figures, but the idea was that we standardised for every primary school, the needs that have to be met if the school is to be of any value at all. If you do not meet them, it is a waste of money to spend whatever is spent for inadequate facilities. Have them improved into adequate facilities. What is adequate has been standardised. We go block by block. We cannot take the entire country as one unit for this purpose. If there is a block, where out of say 60 schools, 15 schools do not have buildings, 35 schools do not have educational aids, now you write them down, put it in the Plan and see that the Operation Blackboard Programme is specifically applied to those schools, or those villages where these schools exist. This was the approach and this was the only approach possible. I am sure a lot has been done under the Operation Blackboard, though I cannot quote figures.

The Programme of Non-formal Education has the objective of enabling learners to learn at their own pace. I have also in mind innumerable innovations, large and small, spearheaded by governments and NGOs in testing and implementing new and creative approaches. Past experience tells us that it is the management of the educational structure and processes that would determine the pace of advancement to universal elementary education.

In a sub-continental nation like India, primary education can not be dealt with in general. It can only be dealt with in a particular context. Therefore, planning for universal elementary education is being increasingly shifted from the State to districts and local levels. A new initiative called the District Primary Education Programme seeks to operationalise the strategy of decentralised planning in districts with low female literacy rate as well as in districts where total literacy campaigns have enhanced the demand for elementary education. The Programme would focus on the learning needs of girls and of disadvantaged groups.

India is now in the midst of a major economic restructuring. We have realised that promotion of education and literacy holds the key to the success of our economic reforms programme. The offshoot of reforms is that private investment both from within India and abroad—is being invited in sectors where earlier only government investment was dominant. This strategy would release funds available with the Government for investment in the social sector, including education. In addition to enhancing public interest in education, we have to consider encouraging private initiative and involvement of local community to augment the resources flowing into the educational sector.

At the Education for All Summit in New Delhi last December, I had announced that we are committed to the goal of allocating 6 per cent of our GNP to education by the turn of this century. To meet this objective, the nation as a whole must assume the responsibility of providing resource support for basic education. That this can be done is best illustrated by the saga of Total Literacy Campaigns. It is the zeal and dedication of these millions of participants in the National Literacy Mission that has brought about a sea change in the public perception of adult literacy. Universal adult literacy is no longer perceived to be a hopeless dream but an achievable task. The same zeal is to be sought for universalisation of elementary education. This would involve massive social

mobilisation : the grand alliance of the government, NGOs, volunteers and learners, and the confluence of folk culture, communication and education and the linkage between other developmental issues.

I firmly believe that raising sufficient resources is only one side of the coin. Equally important is the need for proper application of these resources and for their optimal utilisation. In a programme like education, the most important thing is a little imagination. Without that, all other things will achieve next to nothing. I am completely convinced on this. The teacher, or the administrator in a particular area, in a particular village, particular district has to study the conditions of that district and the educational programme has to be tailored to those conditions. The methodology in Kerala can not be repeated in Bihar today. Maybe after 20 years, 50 years, it will. So this is important. The person who is on the spot, who is imparting education is the real leader in the process and he has to have that imagination, to have that sympathetic understanding of the conditions in which he is functioning.

The community must discharge its responsibility in ensuring that every child receives education either in a primary school or through the non-formal system. The Village Education Committee, the Gram Pradhan, the Headmaster, the teacher and the parents must all join hands and support each other to make learning a joyful experience for the child; only then we would be able to bring the drop-outs back to school. And unless we do this, universalisation of elementary education will remain a dream.

Now what is to be done in order to help the parents of these children, whose poverty prevents them from sending their children to school. This is a specific task. We have to address to this task. Some State governments have started thinking about it fortunately. They are going to each household, finding out why is it that they

cannot send their children to school. It is not always true. In many cases it is an excuse. In many cases again, it is a genuine cause. Separate the excuses, separate the excuse-mongers from those who have a genuine difficulty, see to what extent they have to be helped and what kind of help. We tried mid-day meal. Where the programme succeeded, it succeeded in bringing children to school, detaining them in school; where the programme itself flopped, you cannot expect anything to happen, and nothing happened.

So we have to again have innovative approaches to what is to be done in a particular place. There is a possibility that you can persuade parents other than by giving them money, other than by giving them some benefit or the other. It is possible. You do not know their real need. What this child earns in today's circumstances, taking the wages, what we said 30 years ago when the wages were very low, can not be said today when the wages are good enough. Those wages have been worked out statutorily and how is it that in that wage, the child does not fit in, or education does not fit in? Does the parent really feel that education is necessary. He has some social obligations. He looks after all the obligations except education, why? We have to sometimes talk to them, argue with them, bring them to that conclusion. Why is it that all education, all health, everything should be done only by the government and not by the parent.

We have tried free education; we have not charged any fee. We do not charge fee. We are vying with each other in giving free education. But free education ultimately means only an announcement of free education. I have seen many schools coming up in small villages, the English medium schools, and parents who are ordinary wage earners are made to pay Rs. 15 or 20 or 25 per month to send their children to those schools. Why is it that they do not send them to a Zila Parishad school? Have we gone into this? This is the nitty-gritty into which one has to go. And education is nothing but love of detail. It is not the sweeping

comments that we make. It is the love of details because you are dealing with human beings, tender human beings. You are trying to mould them. They are like a clean slate. It all depends what you want to write there.

Therefore, this is the essence of education and you cannot do it from Delhi or Bombay. You have to do it in the village. It is the Sarpanch's duty, the Pancha's duty, the duty of those who should feel that it is a shame that in their own village, the drop-out rate is so much. If they feel, if they are determined to bring it down to particular level, I am sure they can do it. The influence of the local community is something which is seen to be believed. It is only exerted in other matters, not in matters like education. It is only a question of changing, changing the methodology, changing the target. This is what I have come to conclude on the basis of my own experience.

A critical area where a breakthrough would not be possible without the leading role of NGOs is our Non-formal Education Programme. Because of the socio-economic conditions a large percentage of our children would not be able to attend a rigid formal school. They have to be offered an opportunity to get education through a flexible, innovative and attractive nonformal education programme. This programme would be successful only if it is taken in a missionary spirit with large scale participation of the volunteers in the community which can be done through NGOs. The central role played by NGOs in the adult literacy programme gives me the confidence that NGOs would come forward and accept this challenge.

The central task is to minimise drop-out. If you minimise the drop-out, you minimise your expenditure on adult literacy later. You don't have to start it then; you start it at the early age. The whole programme of adult literacy is a tapering off programme. At the the end of 20-25 years we envisaged that there will be no

need for adult literacy in the sense in which it is being done today because every child at that age of ten or fourteen will become literate. There will be no illiteracy to deal with. But we don't see that's happening. You have to see that on both sides you are able to monitor what is happening. Because we are not able to minimise the drop-out rate in spite of access to school. We are not able to minimise the drop-out rate which means that we are adding constantly to the number of illiterate children. This is where the whole planning and the emphasis on the drop-out rate being brought down is of prime importance.

I would like our industrial sector to step in and play a supportive role in our quest for universal elementary education. Adoption of villages to be developed as models for replication in the area could be one approach. Financing of NGOs engaged in the task of elementary and adult literacy would be another method. Linkages with industry at upper primary or secondary level could help in making our curriculum more meaningful to meet the emerging requirements of the economy. Industry must also play a leading role in giving shape to the contents and methods of our vocational education. I understand that in some countries like the U.K. this interaction between industry and the education sector has paid rich dividends to the society.

Our teachers who struggle in remote and inaccessible areas to light the lamp of learning are the pivot on whom rest all our hopes, our aspirations and our objective to achieve universal elementary education. Our process of teaching needs to change if we wish to make the transaction of education to bring a sense of fulfilment, a sense of pride and a feeling of satisfaction among our teachers. We could think of awards to Panchayats. We give awards to Panchayats for various reasons. The most important parameter, the most important factor in judging the panchayats for awards should be, in my opinion, be the bringing down of the drop-out rate. Why not? This has not been thought in these terms.

It is necessary that we give reorientation to our own priorities in what we think is necessary. There is need for some radical thinking and I would request our teachers to guide us in this effort.

There is an emerging sense of partnership among all those sections of the society which can make a difference in the future of our young children and in the future of our country. The successful achievement of the goal of Education for All is an obligation we owe to our children whose future we hold in our hands today as a sacred trust.

Vibrancy of Tamil Culture

AS I STAND before this large international gathering of distinguished Tamils, I feel privileged to be in the midst of people who have made a name for themselves and for India through their individual and collective achievements. In these last 5 days, scholars from all parts of the world have enlightened this gathering with the contribution of the Tamils to India and to the world. The historic city of Thanjavur has now joined the ranks of cities like Kuala Lumpur, Madras, Madurai and Paris which have had the honour to host this Conference earlier. The serene waters of the Cauvery flowing gently past this renowned centre of art and culture, provide an idyllic setting for a conference of this nature. This international gathering brings together vividly the vastness of the spread of Tamil as a culture, as a language, and in the whole world its spread has been something quite remarkable. Here one can see that Tamil

Nadu is the hub of a culture that has made its deep imprint across the Indian ocean and even beyond.

Thanjavur gave us the Music Trinity, namely, Thyagaraja Swamigal, Muthuswamy Dhikshitar and Shyama Sastri and the forerunners of Tamil music Arunachala Kavirayar, Muthu Thandavar and Marimuthu Pillai. It is also the birth place of Tamil music; divine hymns of the devotees enchanted Thanjavur. Apart from music, Thanjavur is also famous for its architecture, handicrafts, dance, music and the fine arts. Thanjavur paintings are famous throughout the world. An air of aesthetic excellence pervades the atmosphere here. Here stands the big temple, that monumental Chola edifice holding aloft the torch of rich heritage and in full splendour and grandeur.

In commemoration of this Conference, a Raja Raja Chola stamp is being released. I have just released it. I also understand that a gold coin is to be issued in the very near future in commemoration of this occasion. It is, indeed, befitting that we pay our homage to this patron of arts who left the indelible stamp of his rule on our country. The Cholas have a pride of place in our history. They were probably the first Indians who established a strong maritime presence across the seas. They also fostered maritime trade in the Far East.

Let me now come to the theme of this Conference which is contribution of Tamil culture to the 21st century. The distinctiveness of Tamil culture is an established fact that needs no elucidation. Equally well established is its richness and vibrance. For an erudite gathering, it need hardly be added that like all living traditions, this culture has flourished not by distancing itself from, but by continuously adapting to and assimilating from different cultures.

I would like very briefly to touch upon some aspects of Tamil culture to elucidate its contributive and assimilative qualities. As

a language, Tamil has preserved some of the purest forms of the Dravidian family of languages although there has been considerable borrowing from the Indo-Aryan. Tamil has the earliest and richest corpus of literature in the heroic poetry of the Sangam anthologies. The language and its literature are the linguist's delight in comparative studies and historical and socio-linguistics. The idioms and metaphors of this corpus of literature have a special symbolic meaning for the Tamil even today. Although they have been well researched these classics still offer enormous scope for further study—historical and cultural.

Tamil literature was considerably enriched by and in turn influenced Sanskrit due to its interaction with northern literary tradition. To the Sangam anthologies one must add the rich contribution of the Jains and Buddhists such as the two epics *Silappadhikaram* and *Manimekalai* and the didactic works of the *Padhinenkeezh Kanakku*. Of the latter, the *Thirukkural* is of special significance with its universal character. This work has a remarkable typicality about it, which explains its popularity even today.

The Bhakti or devotional poetry of the Vaishnava Alwars and Saiva Nayanmars of the early medieval period represent another genre of literary works which show the continuity of the Tamil vernacular tradition, drawing upon, at the same time from Sanskrit *Puranas* and *Agamas* relating to Vishnu and Siva. These emotionally powerful hymns also spread the message of protest against social inequalities and the idea of community against caste.

The Tamil major and minor *Kavyas* similarly represent the great synthesis of the Sanskritic and Tamil traditions retaining, at the same time, in their rich poetic modes, the Tamil ethos and cultural landscape. Kamban's *Ramavatharam* is the best example of the rendering of the Sanskrit epic in a purely Tamil setting.

In the development of south Indian scripts, Tamil has made significant contribution. It adapted the Brahmi script which was used initially for Pali and Prakrit to the Tamil language with its

phonetic peculiarities and evolved the Grantha scripts for the Sanskrit language. The Brahmi script came in the wake of trade with Ganga region through Andhra and coastal traffic into south India. It also came in the wake of the Buddhist and Jain religions spreading across the country.

The Tamil contribution to Indian temple architecture lies in the evolution of the Dravida style, one of the two major styles—Nagara and Dravida. Its evolution is marked by several stages from the Pallava-Pandya rock-cut caves and monoliths to the sculptural temples of the Chola and Vijayanagara periods, the Chola period representing its apogee, in the stupendous royal temples at Thanjavur and Gangai Konda-Cholapuram which are marvels of engineering skill and aesthetic sensibility. They combine the three art forms, architecture, sculpture and painting as monumental works of art. The Chola bronzes in particular have become cherished objects of art in India and the world over.

This development interestingly coincides with that of the most remarkable Nagara style temples such as the Lingaraja at Bhubaneswar in Orissa, the Khajuraho group of temples in Madhya Pradesh and temples of Rajasthan, all of which mark the emergence of regional States and regional cultures within an overarching idiom of temple architecture and its regional schools under royal patronage.

The Vijayanagar period saw the development of temple architecture in Tamil Nadu through a horizontal magnification and imperial proportions with huge pillared halls and famous Raja Gopurams dotting the landscape of Tamil Nadu. The Chola and Vijayanagar temples are iconographically rich with stylistically advanced sculptural technique and frescos. They are also rich in socio-religious themes.

These expansive temple structures are unique in being centres of the sacred character as well as economic importance and as

symbols of authority with their impressive administrative machinery and integrative role in society.

Tamil contribution to the history of ideas and philosophy has also been significant. Right from the days of Valluvar, the author of the *Thirukkural* which has been translated into many other Indian languages and European languages, ideas on ethics, polity and economy have influenced not only Tamil polity and society but have acquired universal appeal.

Comparative studies of *Kural* have been made with other treatises on polity like the *Arthasastra* and great Greek thinkers like Plato and Aristotle. It is significant that the *Kural* belongs to that era of Indian history in which many of the important *Dharmasastric* and *Arthasastric* works were composed in Sanskrit and carries in it several strands of Jain, Buddhist and *Sastric* influences. Composed in terse epigrams the work deals with three of the main purposes of human existence on *Purushartha*, i.e., *Aram* (Dharma), *Porul* (Artha) and *Inbam* (Kama). Its high ethical and moral tone is as visible in its epigram on economy as on politics. Valluvar spoke of the importance of agriculture as the basis of free economy and exhorted rulers not to use oppressive methods to extract tributes or tax. His advice on a whole range of human relations and existential problems points to his great acumen to the universality of such problems and unity of human kind.

The Bhakti movements of the Alvars and Nayanmars, represented one of the major socio-religious movements of medieval India which directly inspired the structuring of Tamil society and influenced movements of a similar nature elsewhere in the country. In our own times we can see the lead taken by Tamil Nadu in giving the backward classes the impetus necessary for them to progress.

Great Philosophers like Sankara and Ramanuja have created traditions of philosophy by imbibing the *Upanishadic* doctrines

and combining it with Temple Bhakti Movement. The *Ubhaya vedanta* of the Vaishnava tradition and Sankara's *Advaita* have inspired the whole millennium of philosophical speculations in India.

Tamil rulers from the Sangam period onwards have paid special attention to the development of agriculture with irrigation as a major resource. The story of Karikala's attempts to make the Cauvery valley a major resource base and his measures for flood control through dams are well known. The imperial Cholas pursued such efforts. At the same time, for nearly two millennia from the beginning of the Christian era, Tamils have embarked upon trading enterprises with other regions of India, and more significantly, on maritime trade with distant lands. This region was never an area of isolation for it was drawn into a larger network of maritime shipping and trade from the Gujarat coast to the Bengal coast and between the Mediterranean world and East and South-East Asia. Individual enterprise and corporate trading ventures have characterised these activities, especially in the early centuries of Christian era and in the early medieval time and even beyond.

In the wide ramification of early trade and commerce, Tamil traders played a major role in the trade between the Roman Empire and the South-East Asia. The Sangam anthologies, the epics, the classical Greek accounts of navigators and geographers like Plini, Ptolemy and the unknown author of the *Periplus of the Erythrian Sea* are corroborated by a vast body of archaeological and other evidence dispersed along the trade routes. They established the prosperity that was generated in the region by this flourishing trade.

Research has shown how the political elite, especially the imperial Cholas promoted this trade and how south Indian merchants' guilds were major participants. These guilds carried on inter-regional trade in peninsular India and also ventured into distant lands in East and South-East Asia. Spices, gems, luxury items,

textiles, aromatic wood, incense and camphor were some of the items which were popular items of trade. The Cholas sent emissaries abroad to promote trade and political relations. They even gave liberal endowments to religious institutions.

The courage to change, the confidence to learn and the wisdom to teach are products of this strong and vibrant culture. Culture facilitates our interaction with fellow human beings and education gives us the necessary ability to do so. Our faculties of learning are sharpened by our confidence in our culture and education. Our willingness to interact with others increases with self-assurance. When international trade and commerce flourished in this region, one writer described life in the port town of Kaveripattanam, also called Puhar in 2nd century A.D. which is as follows :

“People speaking diverse tongues that come from great and foreign homes mix freely on friendly terms with those who occupy this glorious town.”

When I hear people advocating our country's isolation from the world today, I am astounded at their ignorance of our own history. The environmental awareness depicted in the Sangam anthologies, ethical precepts of the *Kural* and the egalitarianism of the Bhakti Movement show a remarkable universalism and farsightedness. We have to seek the wisdom of these ancients and try to assimilate the qualities that brought them international acclaim; we have to learn how they brought prosperity to our land. These studies should not be only academic dissertations useful as they are for their own sake or exercises in promoting exclusivism. I would like to submit that they should have a broader social and economic objective of creating awareness and encouraging integrative and humanistic approaches.

We, in India, rejoice in our freedom of belief and expression. This is the fountain of all creativity and creativity is both the

precondition and the fruit of progress. It is true that creativity also leads to diversity. But then happily in our civilization, we have always celebrated diversity. We do not and should not seek the orderliness of mediocrity or the easy course of uniformity.

As you look ahead to the 21st century, I do not need to state the obvious to you that the contribution of the community in the coming millennium will depend upon what it contains and what it has to offer. This in turn will depend upon its internal dynamism and ability to keep abreast with the world. Distances are shrinking rapidly in terms of time. We have to keep widening our horizons because they are constantly closing in on us under the relentless pressure of technological progress. I am confident that your deliberations just concluded will help all of us in this task.

NCC—a Valuable Auxiliary to Education System

MY YOUNG FRIENDS of the NCC, I am very happy to be amongst officers and cadets of National Cadet Corps. The formation of the National Cadet Corps in 1948 was one of the most significant events for the student community in India. In the 46 years of its existence, the Corps has evolved into a premier youth organisation in the country transcending boundaries of caste, creed, religion and sex. Its motto—unity and discipline, is the hallmark of national integration, community development and international understanding. The National Cadet Corps has come a long way since its small beginnings. Today, with a cadet strength of 11.2 lakh, it

has evolved into a valuable auxiliary to our education system and provides value-related training to its cadets in character building, leadership, good citizenship and spirit of sportsmanship. NCC training, thus, assumes great significance in today's context in our country. I would like to see NCC training being given encouragement in fulfilling its aims by all including parents, educational institutions, State governments, and the Central Government. Through unity and discipline, I would like NCC cadets to spread the message of national integration, national efforts towards the nation's all-round development and spirit of tolerance to all parts of the country. Your camp here resembles the nation itself, of course, much more disciplined and better organised version of it as it should be. I am sure that during the last 25 days of your stay together, the NCC Republic Day camp, you would have discovered for yourself that people of various States of our Republic have much in common. We, in India have every reason to be proud of our varied, ancient and rich cultural heritage. I am told that adventure activities have now become an integral part of the NCC training and in many of them girls are excellent. Cadets today scale mountains, skip through exotic places, sail down rivers and open seas and take part in many other activities. Adventure makes one tough, and gives courage and confidence to face the challenges of life.

I would like to congratulate all of you for your excellent performance. Not only this morning but also yesterday at the Republic Day Parade where your performance was, really, wonderful. I congratulate you once again for that. The National Cadet Corps today is a reservoir of trained and disciplined youth at the service of the nation. It is also an excellent nurturing ground for our Armed Force. It is my hope that you will benefit from the NCC training and grow up to be worthy citizen of our great country.

Universalisation of Basic Education

IN A MAJOR effort to provide their citizens with basic education as a fundamental human right, and an essential requirement for development, the leaders of Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria and Pakistan had gathered in New Delhi on 16 December 1993, at the world's first Education Summit.

The EFA Summit of these nine high population countries, which culminated in the Delhi Declaration on December 16, was a logical step ahead from the Jomtien Conference held in Thailand in March 1990 which launched a worldwide initiative to reach the goal of 'Education for All.'

Hosted by India, and sponsored by UNESCO, UNICEF & UNFPA, the New Delhi Summit was a historic opportunity to mobilise high level political support, as well as financial and technical resources, for primary education and literacy programmes.

The nine countries together account for over 70 per cent of the world's illiterate population and more than half of its out-of-school children. The total population of these countries, 2.7 billion, or half of the world's total, is expected to grow phenomenally by the year 2000. Education, especially for women, is generally believed to be the key to slowing this increase. The EFA Summit acknowledged the fact that education of women is not only a basic human right, but also a reliable indication of their own and their children's health and education.

The goals of the Summit were (1) to express a commitment at the higher political level to implement actions that, while being

Speech while presiding over the fund meeting of the Heads of Delegation of Nine High Population Countries, Copenhagen, 10 March 1995

bold and ambitious, are also realistic and achievable and (2) to enable countries to compare approaches, strategies and ways of mobilising resources. The Summit also aimed at reenergising the commitment of the international community to the goals of Jomtien.

Since the EFA Summit, all the nine countries have made basic education a budget priority. Basic education increases economic productivity, enhances social and cultural awareness, promotes health and child survival and slows down population growth. This is also the prime reason why we are here today on the occasion of the World Summit for Social Development, reaffirming our conviction that basic education must occupy a central place on the agenda for social development.

We, the leaders of the nine high population countries, strongly believe that Education for All is a fundamental and essential tool in the pursuit of social development.

Prior to this public meeting, my colleagues and I had a private meeting to review the principal lines of action initiated since the Delhi Summit, for instance, Brazil has organised a broad based National Conference on EFA to launch an ambitious ten-year action plan; China has taken numerous measures to improve the quality of basic education, and the International Institute for Rural Education, located in China, has been established to facilitate exchange of knowledge on education in the rural areas, Pakistan has strengthened its policies to raise girls' participation in EFA; Egypt is engaged in an effort to improve the quality of teaching by using modern technology; Nigeria is expanding its national campaign for literacy; Bangladesh is taking steps to reach the unreached in the distant rural areas; Indonesia is implementing strong policies to bring education to all adult illiterates in the foreseeable future; and Mexico is pushing hard to develop indigenous education.

Speaking for my country, we are making great strides towards the goals of universal primary education and universal literacy.

India is now in the midst of a major economic restructuring. Outlays on education would increase as programmes in the development of infrastructure and in core sectors, which had hitherto taken up the bulk of Government expenditure, are taken over by non-governmental investment. In addition to augmenting public investment in education, we are encouraging private initiative, and involvement of local communities for supplementing the resources flowing into the education sector. Our target is to boost expenditure on education to 6 per cent of the GNP from the current level of about 3.7 per cent. We are also decentralising educational decision making to the elected local bodies and involving the community in EFA through Village Education Committees.

The National Literacy Mission in India has already led 15 million individuals from illiteracy to learning. This is a gigantic programme involving almost 7 million volunteers spread over 323 districts in the country. Since the New Delhi Summit, we have launched an ambitious District Primary Education Programme for the restructuring of basic education aimed at drastic reduction in drop-out rates and improvement in the quality of education with achievement of at least minimum levels of learning. This programme involves development of district-specific interventions with participative planning. We are now confident that Education for All would be a reality in India in the foreseeable future. Just last month, I had the pleasure of inaugurating the Inter-active Training and Developmental Channel of the Indian National Satellite (INSAT) in New Delhi. I spoke on the TV screen to several individuals in far-flung rural areas in south India, over 2,000 km away. This channel, with a unique "question asking" facility enables students to interact with the teachers, simulating "virtual" class rooms.

I am confident that, after our trials have established the system formally in India, we can share this expertise with our friends, particularly with countries participating in this Summit.

While technology provides the foundation for this project, the super structure of software, nevertheless, has to be assiduously

developed to ensure that the knowledge we seek to impart is intelligible to those we need to reach.

Our teachers need to learn and relearn not only the tools provided by the technology we possess but, more importantly, the cultural complexities and the changes in attitudes of the students in their specific environment.

As preparations for the World Summit on Social Development were coming to an end in New York in January, the persistent efforts of the developing countries, including India, to seek a Summit level commitment on education for sustained and effective social development were recognised and accepted. A Special Working Group was established in Copenhagen to work out this commitment under India's Chairmanship. It is a matter of great satisfaction to us all that the Working Group has been able to finalise the additional commitment on education and health, which are indispensable elements in the major theme of the World Summit to eradicate poverty. The Summit leaders will commit themselves to promoting and attaining the goals of universal and equitable access to quality education without discrimination or distinction on any grounds, formulate and strengthen time-bound national strategies for the eradication of illiteracy and the universalisation of basic education, lay emphasis on lifelong learning, pay particular attention to children in general and girl children in particular for the purpose of full equitable access to education, develop broad-based education programmes for promoting and strengthening the values of tolerance and promotion of human rights and ensure equal educational opportunities for persons with disabilities. At the international level, the Summit leaders will commit themselves to ensure that international financial institutions will support these objectives and integrate them into their policy programmes and operations. The efforts we have made in the Education for All Summit now has broader and more universal support in terms of the recognition of education as indispensable for promoting social integration and development.

In the course of discussions during our private meeting, we were unanimous that basic education for all is among the most crucial enabling factors for achieving social development in our countries. Because of this conviction, we have appealed to the leaders of all countries assembled in Copenhagen to give due consideration to the key role of education in the “Copenhagen commitments” that will guide government in following up the deliberations at this Summit.

I would like to read out, on behalf of my colleagues of the nine high population countries gathered here, a Joint Communique on Education for All summarising the main areas of our discussions:

We, the Heads of Delegation of the Nine High Population Countries participating in the World Summit for Social Development convened in Copenhagen, recognise Education for All as an indispensable means to the achievement of the goals that we are gathered here to pursue. Education for All is essential in overcoming exclusion and achieving social integration in modern societies; it is instrumental to the success of efforts to reduce unemployment and eliminate poverty. Indeed, nothing is more fundamental to the achievement of social progress than the development of human competence through education and training.

Conscious of the essential role that education plays in promoting social development, we hereby

— reiterate our commitment, expressed in the Jomtien World Declaration on Education for All and reaffirmed in the Delhi Declaration adopted at the Summit of the Nine High-Population Countries in December 1993, to basic education and the provision of opportunities for life-long learning as the cornerstone of social development and national progress;

— renew our pledge to act vigorously to improve the quality of education, reform its content and organisation, and expand

educational opportunities, giving special consideration to disadvantaged groups, as an essential component of national social development plans and progress;

— urge the participants in this Summit to pursue Education for All as a human right and priority for social development;

— report with pride the significant and measurable progress our countries are making towards the goal of providing quality education to all, through improved formulation and implementation of policies at the national, sub-national and community levels, increased mobilisation of resources, innovations in practice, and higher rates of participation and achievement among students;

— appeal to the leaders of all countries as to the movement of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) gathered at this Summit to ensure, through all available means, that priority attention is accorded to basic education, particularly for girls and women, as an essential measure in advancing social progress and equitable development for all peoples;

— acknowledge with appreciation the cooperation of international organisation and agencies in promoting Education For All and urge that their efforts in this crucial undertaking be continued and intensified.

U.R. Anantha Murthy —a Versatile Genius

I FEEL GREATLY privileged and immensely delighted to associate myself with this concluding session of the Golden Jubilee celebrations of Bharatiya Jnanpith, the highly prestigious literary and cultural organisation of our country and to present the Jnanpith Award to the eminent Kannada writer Prof. U. R. Anantha Murthy.

I would like to congratulate both Prof. Anantha Murthy and the Board of Trustees of Bharatiya Jnanpith on this happy occasion. Bharatiya Jnanpith and the Jnanpith Award have become part of our cultural history now with the successful completion of 50 years of silent and significant service in the cause of our languages, literature, culture and philosophy. All this has become possible because of the devotion and dedication of the two visionaries Smt Rama Jain and Shri Shanti Prasad Jain. I am, indeed, happy that this high tradition is being kept up ably and assiduously today by the successors, while imparting new dimensions of development to this great institution.

I have a special relationship with Jnanpith, having been Chairman of its Selection Committee for nearly a decade. Only when I felt that Jnanpith was in grave danger of being seen as a part of the much-maligned PMO, I decided to call it a day and yielded place to a revered successor, Dr Karan Singh. This experience made me read the best in Indian literature and read it critically, at the same time sympathetically. It gave me a better insight into the interaction between literature and life, between fancy and fact, between the word and what it often fails to convey.

It is also relevant to remember the pious soul Smt Moorti Devi whose searching eye on the palm leaves manuscript kept at Moodbidri temple for centuries, brought to light *Mahabandha*, a treasure house of knowledge, thereby showing a new direction to the seekers of knowledge, letters and the meaning of life. I also congratulate all those eminent personalities whose selfless service has evolved this institution into the shape it has assumed today.

Prof. Anantha Murthy is a noted personality in the field of literature, culture and contemplative vision. He enriched Indian literature through creative writing in Kannada, and richly deserves the honour that is being conferred upon him today. He is a typical Indian writer who, in his own words, believes in the 'creation' of a civil society which delights in pluralities of culture and is ever eager to listen to other voices. I believe there is a subtle distinction between societies in this respect. A plural society is not the same as a society which becomes a conglomerate by circumstances. In the latter case, the inherent genius of the society is not plural, with the result that it tends to develop tensions by the advent of plurality by mere physical contact and unavoidable interaction. On the other hand, the Indian society is inherently pluralistic, where our sages, even sitting in their solitary abodes, even without any frequent interaction with others, celebrated plurality and declared: 'Let noble thoughts come to us from all sides.' It is this readiness to entertain all that is good, no matter where it comes from that promotes the wholesome evolution of a nation and its people. 'Learn We Must' is the message Prof. Anantha Murthy has for the world of letters and the living.

Like the fire, he would like us to be stern and stubborn and also to stand mute, to shed and to endure, like the tree. This is a beautiful description of what man should be, but generally what he is not.

I sincerely feel that the advent of Anantha Murthy in the field of Indian literature has brought new light to the land of learning.

As a creative writer of critical and contemplative vision, he has influenced the generations that followed him. It is significant to note that his very first works in various genres, *Samskara* (his first novel), *Prasne* (his first story collection) and *Prajne Mattu Parisara* (his first work on literary criticism) have brought a new light in the Kannada sensibility. When the Kannada poetry was standing perplexed at the cross roads of tradition and modernity, he charged fiction with poetic intensity and poetry with realistic vision. Thus he started a new mode of writing which is inimitably simple and radiant. He has inherited the rich tradition of modern Kannada literature but at the same time added new chapters and chartered it to serve the cause better. Being neither escapist-utopian nor a nihilist or armchair revolutionary, he portrays the struggle of his individual characters against the backdrop of a fast-changing society wherein not every change is necessarily for the better. Thus, I think Anantha Murthy really portrays more people than the average reader would normally imagine, and more facets of the society than are seen on the surface. From the little that I have been able to read him, he strikes me as always alert in his agony. In sum, he gives me an expectant feeling that his best is still to come. Let us all wait, while admiring what has come already.

It is very difficult to say whether Murthy is basically a poet or a critic or a story writer. In his fiction, he is factual, in his flow of emotions, he is a critical insider and in his thought provoking speeches, he keeps himself undisturbed (*avyagra*) only to disturb others so that they may overcome the external disturbances. By honouring such a writer of versatile genius, we are honouring the great tradition of Indian thought, culture and excellence. I heartily congratulate him for having secured a seat in the galaxy of modern Kannada writers like Dr K.V. Puttappa, Dr Bendre, Shivaram Karanth, Masti Venkatesh Iyengar and Prof. V. K. Gokak.

There is remarkable similarity in post-independence literature in all languages of India. There are, of course, several shades of

difference between language and language, depending on local events and psychologies, but the dominant trends are common throughout the country. This again demonstrates the unity of India through historical experience and literary perception. I am personally aware of several critical insiders as distinguished from the much larger number of inside critics spanning the literatures. Anantha Murthy is one of the few to be recognised by Jnanpith—thus heralding a new and welcome trend in the Jnanpith's literary vision. I may add that in the Selection Committee, we have always had a tussle between the essential features that one has to look for while evaluating a poet or a writer. For some time, we went by the sum total, the output, of the writer and its quality. For some time, we went by the evolution of his best work, the masterpiece. We were not able to decide which of the two methods was correct. But, I think, on the whole, the Selection Committee has done a fine job in going along with the times and Prof. Anantha Murthy is the latest addition, not only as the person but as a trend in literature and I feel happy about it. As a former Chairman of Selection Committee, I can perceive this evolution clearly, considering, for instance, the contrast between Masti and Murthy, both of whom I know very well and both of whom I have tried to read to some extent.

I conclude with a small poem written by Prof. Murthy which has bearing on the modern complexities of life struggling for the transient and yet craving for the eternal. The theme of the poem is “Gandhi's Chappals.” The poet says :

The Glory of the British Empire wore out
As the Chappals made and worn
By Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi
of the spinning profession
Gradually wore out.
The Chappals worn by that man on the last day
That yet have some wear in them

Still remain in the same state.

This is perhaps a graphic description of the Gandhian treasure of thought and action which the war-weary and peace-searching world today is beginning to turn to, though not quite knowing how.

I am glad that Anantha Murthy has reminded us in these lines of our great tradition and explained its relevance to our day-to-day problems. The two chappals like the two sandals of Rama collected and carried home by his devoted brother Bharata could perhaps represent the twin concepts of change and continuity in which the main ingredients are *Yoga* (acquisition) and *Kshema* (Preservation)—the two requisites of progress.

I hope Bharatiya Jnanpith will take note of the wisdom behind these lines and serve the cause of human values, dignity and welfare by nurturing our languages, literature and culture in the years to come, spanning out into new programmes which will not only attract attention, but which will really become additions to the multifaceted concept of literature and its effect on life. I wish them all best.

V

Health and Social Welfare

Evolving New Strategies to Fight Cancer

I AM VERY happy to be associated with the inauguration of this International Congress. I welcome you to the city of Delhi, in the midst of the festival season. This is the first time this Congress is being held in a developing country. It is fitting that the honour to host such a distinguished gathering should go to this historic city.

Cancer is a major global health problem which is rapidly increasing in developing countries. In India, there are believed to be around 2 million persons suffering from cancer and about 6 hundred thousand new cases are detected every year. However, despite its global dimensions, cancer remains an enigma in modern science and a challenge to the skill and ingenuity of the scientists and doctors.

I am quite sure that these figures are a real discovery of today, because we had cancer in this country without knowing that it was cancer. This part of it is not quite realised. I come from a small village. Way back in 1949 when we were all activists in the political struggle, just attained independence, conditions in the villages were nothing less than horrible. It so happened I returned to my village after some hectic activity and a woman came to me, elderly woman, may be 45-50 years, she didn't know what to tell me. She was having pain in her breast. Now look at the social problem. Is it possible for an Indian woman or any woman for that matter, to lay bare her breast and show it except to a lady doctor or a doctor. She was not able either to describe what it was, or to show that part of the body to anyone. It was a real problem for her

to describe and it was an equally real problem for me to understand and I may add that I knew something about law but I had no knowledge at all about cancer. I have no way of helping her. After a day or two I somehow gathered a little money and sent her to the district hospital. There also nothing was available by way of treatment, but a doctor said this is breast cancer. That discovery or the diagnosis was of no avail because she died after that without treatment. She could have died in ignorance, she could have died in full knowledge of what she was suffering from, made no difference to the death. That was in 1949.

Came 1981, when an elderly person in our own family made the same complaints, started with the same complaint. Fortunately my village had got a Primary Health Centre by then, there was a doctor, he immediately diagnosed what it was and she was rushed to Hyderabad, where there is a cancer hospital and not that she was cured, because there is no cure, as we understand, but she got lot of relief. The case was diagnosed, the case was examined, some kind of medication was given and so on. She also died, but there was a vast difference between the available treatment or whatever the patient could be given by way of relief. And today I understand that for the past few years cancer treatment has been taken lower to the grass roots levels and particularly there is some arrangement by which certain health workers, having given some training by which they can immediately detect it and rush the patient to the nearest hospital or wherever the facility is, and as doctors say, "A great many cases can be saved by early detection." So all that we know of today is the need for early detection which is being organised in India and I am sure in the developing countries also. And so this is the improvement that we have seen in the past 30 years. Even now it defies a specific solution, a specific treatment and the problem continues. I am sure you will be able to device some methods for these developing countries, specific to the developing countries. Because in this area I find that—I have been Health Minister in the State, I have been Health Minister

at the Centre—the main difficulty is the realisation of the importance of the prophylactic aspect of medicine is very low. The Primary Health Centre tends to become a hospital. Not even tends to, actually becomes a hospital and the doctor is supposed to look after the health problems of the area. He becomes a medical practitioner, he takes a bag, goes from village to village, in some cases he does what a medical practitioner does, I don't have to elaborate.

So the preventive aspect is something which needs to be enormously strengthened in the developing countries because a patient who is actually suffering from some disease and needs treatment is a higher priority to the society, to the family, to the person himself than imagining that something might come after six months or a year and therefore we have to prevent it, so the prevention part of it becomes a casualty in our attention.

We are trying our best in this country and I am sure something more is being done in smaller but more advanced countries among the developing countries but in countries like India it is the enormity of the problem. It may not be the complexity actually, it may be the same repeated over a million times and then the problem of finding resources, finding the people who are prepared to go and work in those far-flung areas and a question of organising this. These are the real problems of the developing countries. How do you cope with these problems when it comes to early detection in cancer ? This is perhaps our main question; the main problem which needs to be solved, needs to be attacked, needs to be tackled.

As you unravel the complexity of the human system, we are confronted with the need for more sophisticated and advanced technology to decipher the secrets of the body and the cells, a doctor of today is increasingly becoming more of a technocrat who relies heavily on reports churned out by complex scanners and machines. This is another problem here. It is easy to get a machine but

extremely difficult to maintain it and keep it working. In many cases the moment it comes out of the package, it doesn't take much time to go out of order. The maintenance of medical machinery or any machinery for that matter in this country is a very difficult problem. It's rather humiliating to see that we get a machine at great expense and find that after six months it is lying idle, there is no one to look into it and if someone looks into it, he makes it worse. This again is a problem of the developing countries. We have not had middle level technical expertise to keep a machine going. It's easy to spend money, and get a machine.

So, I have seen in many hospitals, many institutes, machines which are as modern as anywhere in the world, but their working, the upkeep, their maintenance, their repair, all this leaves much to be desired and that is also one of the factors which counts in dealing with cancer. Such technologies are often essential both as a diagnostic aid and a tool for treatment. However, prohibitive costs and other constraints make it inevitable for poorer countries like India to make do with technology that is more appropriate to our working environment, ensuring that this is not at the expense of the life and health of the patient. This is the challenge before our doctors and other experts. When it comes to expensive machinery, there is also what is called the snobbery about machines. If I have a machine which is two years old, it is supposed to be out of date. If the same machinery has some small parts changed and a version of 1995 is available, then the desire is to have the 1995 one immediately. This again is perhaps one of the characteristics of governments and the societies in developing countries. Have the latest, with the result that costs are going up. So, this is one of the problems which we have to face.

I am sure, you will be able to find some solutions to it because no matter whether the machine is two years old or five years old, if it is good for the purpose it is meant and it is still working, it should be possible for us to wait for a couple of years more to see if there is real qualitative jump in the technology. The level

of the technology being the same, a small nut here or a bolt there being added every year and making it a new model, affluent countries can certainly afford that, not we. We have to make do with the same model, we change only when there is a jump, a jump in the technology. There is a total change in the concept etc., then of course we become out of date, I understand that. So this is another culture which has to come in to the developing countries and particularly with these very expensive machines needed for treatment or diagnosis of many diseases. This is one very important fact which will be taken into account. It may be appropriate to say that 'prevention is better than cure'. But it makes sound medical and financial sense, especially in a developing country as I just said.

A successful drive to prevent cancer will be very rewarding in helping to evolve such strategies. The government will not be found lacking and the Government of India has identified Regional Cancer Centres which it tries to support in nine different States. This is not much of an achievement in a country with 26 States and nine hundred million people, we have only nine centres. It's not much, to be said. There are some cases where people from the North-East had to come all the way to Madras. Now we are having something in between, somewhere in Calcutta, somewhere in Guwahati and so on. We are trying to make it more and more decentralised but we are only trying, we have not yet succeeded in making it available to the farthest areas of the country. This is something which one has to admit because we have other priorities, we have other pressures and our condition, whether of the government or the private institutions, is not as good as to have all these things together within a short period. We have to wait, but at the same time it is a challenge for the government to draw up the right priorities, if you go wrong in priorities then you can go wrong in everything else because priority, is the crux of the entire ordering of the society in developing countries. Priority—just one word.

The Tata Memorial Hospital for Cancer established in 1941 was a pioneer in the effort to bring highly specialised treatment within the reach of our people. The Government of India took charge of Tata Memorial Centre in 1961 and has contributed to its development into a premier institution of medical research and learning. This is a classic example of how the private and the public sectors can join hands for effective service to the community. But keeping in view the size of our population and the magnitude of the problem, much more needs to be done. The need for a new advanced centre for the research, education and treatment in cancer, now coming up in new Bombay will give further impetus to our efforts at cancer control.

Today's science and research is tomorrow's medicine but I would like you to pause and reflect about the marvels of the human system itself. The way nature has honed its skills for millions of years. They make you and me what we are today. The body's own defence systems need to be studied more intensively. The study of yoga, music and its positive impact on human system may appear very simplistic to an erudite and distinguished audience like this but these are important issues which need to be addressed and can form an important component of your research activities. I believe this is being done for many other purposes in other countries.

We have a lot of wisdom, old wisdom, ancient wisdom available on the effect of music, on the effect of yoga etc. But then you have to put it in a modern garb. Only then it becomes acceptable otherwise we think it is something which people had a fad about 2000 years ago or 500 years ago and we are modern, we don't have to believe in all this unless the modern man brings it back to us. We are not prone to believe it. This is what always happens. We call time, we represent time in a circle; so you come back after sometime to where you started. This is how even human knowledge is going into circles. You should also pause and reflect why alternative medicine is becoming popular and acceptable today.

This is not surprising because much of the modern scientific medicine is geared towards the body and too little to the mind of society. A judicious balance of importance of the mind and the body in treating illnesses is imperative. I am happy to note that there would be special sessions on these psychological aspects of cancer during this Congress. Even something like cancer without calling it a cancer occurs in some of our literature in this country. It is described very graphically, not as a disease. It becomes part of our ordinary parlance. Something which you can not help and which goes on giving you trouble, like cancer. You don't know what to do about it. There is no cure, there is no medicine, there is no doctor to put it right, but it nags you. It gives you intense pain and that kind of thing. There are words to describe a disease like this. The man describing it doesn't know what it is but he knows only the effects, only the feelings, only what the patient feels like and from there, from the symptoms, literature has coined words. Several languages in India have coined words. So it's the human experience that is available, treatment is not available, diagnosis is not available, the scientific explanations so far are not available, but the feeling and the description is available.

So there is something lacking between what we have and what we need to have further. Today's knowledge is not just coming out of the air. It's based on certain things which were already available. We did not know what they are, we did not dissect. We did not analyse, we did not take them to a laboratory and this is what the scientific confirmation of wisdom which is already available by way of intuition in ancient countries. This is the bridge that needs to be formed by modern science. Science transcends national barriers, it is a manifestation of the insatiable curiosity of the human mind. It goes with human interaction. I am confident this will be so in this Congress in your endeavour to evolve new strategies in the research and treatment of cancer. As you progress, you must constantly evaluate your successes against failures, benefits

against risks and new technologies against the old wisdom. Constant introspection paves the path of progress.

I wish you all success in your deliberation and have great pleasure in inaugurating the Congress.

Provide Best Opportunities to Brave Children

I WELCOME YOU to this very meaningful function where we are honouring children who do not know yet how to be honoured. They have done something which was the result of an instinct—instinct which prompts them to do things which on serious reflection very few persons would dare to do. Perhaps one of the reasons why these children could do such unbelievably courageous things is because they did not have time to reflect as human beings, as persons in whom the basic human instinct was very active and not overshadowed by the thinking, the vacillation which later comes with adulthood.

I am also happy to see that most of them come from villages. The kind of situations you and I cannot probably believe, cannot even imagine, somebody wrestling with a wild beast, somebody rescuing people from a burning house, from water, from a beehive, stings of the bees. Now, these are situations which perhaps we cannot normally imagine. Even a writer perhaps could think of one or two of these situations but not all of them and all the variety of these situations because these are mainly from the countryside. The

dangers and the situations in which the boys and girls in the countryside find themselves are very very clear.

I remember, at the age of 10 or 11, we used to go to the well. We did not have swimming pools; we do not have them still. All swimming is learnt either in tanks or in wells in the countryside. And we have also come across, most of us who come from villages, situations where a boy or a girl or someone suddenly loses control, is not able to swim properly. We do not have all the appliances which are available in the cities. And this is a common feature that children who go to learn swimming or go to swim thinking that they can also swim because their friends can swim find themselves unable to swim while their friends are able to swim. These are some of the situations which come very commonly, very frequently in villages. Beehives are a common feature. There are some other kinds of bees which are not the normal bees which give you honey, they are just wasps which sting. He who does something gets stung, sometimes badly. I have seen children, even adults, sometimes badly stung. In the case of ladies, it is a little better in the villages because they have at least their *pallu*, but men folk do not have that protection and when they are stung, they are stung much more than the ladies are. This has been my observation. So these are very very different situations of danger in which the immediate response of the child is spontaneous. It is absolutely non-reflective. It is just a reflex that comes out and he or she responds to the situation.

I am very happy that we have been able to honour some of them. I am sad to find that some of these children have lost their lives. It is a very sad thing for their parents to have lost them, not in the normal circumstances, but in a very extraordinary situation where the child goes to save someone and has to lay down his life. It is a very sad thing. I give my condolences to the parents. I hope we will be able to do something for them, something more than what has been done here. We have crores and crores of such children, potentially, equally good, equally courageous, equally brave. We

have to see that all these children are given the best opportunities available in this country. Whatever is available to one child in one corner of the country should be available to every other child in every other corner of the country without any distinction of class, religion or creed and we should aim at that. We are trying to do that.

You perhaps know that some of these children who are very very intelligent—God has given them a natural talent—are being selected from the remotest villages. They are being put in what are called Navodaya Vidyalayas one for each district. We have not even completed one round of all the districts for want of funds and so on, because we do not charge even a single naya paise from the parents. We bring them to the school; even the bus charges are borne by the Government; everything is borne by the Government. And we have found, I am very happy to say, that wherever these children have been taught in these schools, trained in these schools, they have stood first in all the classes, in all the examinations, and they have beaten all our public schools, the grammar schools and all the rest of the highbrow schools we have in the cities. This has been the talent available even to the extent where we have been able to detect it and there is an ocean of undetected talent still available in the country. I do not know when we will be able to tap it, to give them all the opportunities that they deserve as citizens of India. If one is born in a town, it does not mean one is superior; if one is born in a village, it does not mean one is inferior. God has made people equal at birth. Every child is born illiterate. That is one common feature that God has given everyone, whether he is born in a millionaire's house or a billionaire's house or in a hut. All these babies are born illiterate. It is from that stage that we have to bring them to the highest potential that God has given them. We have no right to cut down that potential artificially because of our incapacity, because of our social barriers, stratification and all man-made differences. We have to do away with them.

I am happy to see these children. I give them my blessings, my best wishes for a bright future as proud and capable citizens of this

country and through them, I would like to tell the people, the crores and crores of such children everywhere in the country that it will be my endeavour—I cannot say that I will be able to achieve it in full—to bring them to the potential which God has given them, give them equal opportunities without any distinction whatsoever.

Empowering Women

I AM, INDEED, very happy to be associated with this Award function. I had not expected that within such a short time, after the initiation of this scheme, we would be in a position to say that certain achievements have been made and certain persons and institutions have qualified for these Awards. First of all, I would like to congratulate all of them who have made it possible for this programme to be seen, to be felt and to be applauded at the national level. Going through human history, one finds that one of the greatest acts of hypocrisy has been the behaviour of man towards women. This is a regrettable fact, we have really tried to put the women on a very high pedestal so far as our words are concerned, but it has to be admitted that the woman has had to bear the brunt of all the difficulties in the family and man comparatively has not been as responsible as was expected of him. I am talking in very very general terms; it is not that I am accusing any one person or any one family.

यत्र नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते
रमन्ते तत्र देवताः ॥

This is the kind of pedestal that we have erected for the woman. We put her there but that is all. It is just like garlanding the statue

of Mahatma Gandhi and not exactly doing, what he had told us to do. This goes on and I think this hypocrisy has to end. And that is why this concept of empowerment has come. If we have not realised that, nothing can be done. You empower a person, that is, you give that person the power to do the right thing; even to do the right thing, power is needed, and empowerment is a necessary condition in which anything can be done by way of bringing the women out of the stupor, out of the condition into which she has been pushed over the ages.

Take *Dharma Shashtra* for instance. Now the entire scheme of *Dharma Shastras* was weighed against the women in favour of the men. I am not saying that this had been done deliberately by someone like Manu or whoever he was, to be imposed as a woman hater. I do not say that. The way they conceived the organisation of the society in those times, they thought this was the only way of doing it; this was the best way of doing it. We have patriarchal systems; we have the better familial system in the Roman Law. Everywhere we have this system. It is not as if it was only in the *Dharma Shastras* of India. We have had it everywhere.

Now, things have changed. Things have to change because we have come to a grinding halt. The progress of a society where 50 per cent of it is non-entity, the other 50 per cent more than 100 per cent, could not have gone on for ever. It has to come to a grinding halt at some point of time. In other societies it came to a grinding halt at different points of time. You may perhaps be surprised to know that even the vote to the women in many of the advanced countries, is a recent phenomenon.

Mahatma Gandhi on the other hand involved the women first in going to jail, first in the freedom movement, with the result that when 1947 came, and we started writing out the Constitution of India, no one could say that women should get anything inferior by way of any power or any right in the scheme of things. Because the

women had earned their position here by making equal sacrifices with men in the hardest ever of the ordeals which the Indian society had to go through, namely, the struggle for independence. That is how she was brought to a position of equality. But after that, what are the property laws? What is the position? For instance, in the property laws, in the laws of succession, again everything is loaded against women. What is she entitled to according to Manu, according to Yajnavalkya, according to Mitakshara? She is not entitled to anything except maintenance. This is how it was.

Now, things have changed. Fortunately, we have passed so many other laws and the position of women has changed definitely for the better. But this is how it is. When I studied Hindu Law in 1943-44, this was the correct answer. What is the right of the women in the Hindu family? The answer is maintenance. But even then, there was a concept called *Stridhan*. Under certain circumstances, certain special rights over property were given to the women. Those rights were not to be invaded by the man whether it was husband or the son or father or collateral anybody. It was exclusively for the women. Even in those days men were treating the women very harshly. So, they wanted to make a little exception, that is, a present given at the time of marriage to the girl, to the blood relations, to the parents or someone or friends, belonged to her. That is *Stridhan* and it should not be taken away from her by the husband. So it was said that there was a property concept and the property which belonged exclusively to the women in the family could not be taken away.

Now, we have expanded on that. Today the laws are very different. But the implementation is more or less the same. In many States, in many societies the law is something, but the actual implementation is different. The land does not go to the daughter even if the law says so, because she is given away in marriage in some other place and she will not be able to manage the asset or the

agriculture or the land. So, you will find that in spite of the change in law, the implementation is more or less on the old laws. One does not know what is to be done in order to correct the position. So, ultimately, with all the innovations, with all the new laws that we have passed, the position of the women still happens to be far from satisfactory. This is what one has to conclude.

This is really the problem which the Indian society or the society in general is faced with. I find that our Indian women are much better off in the position of the family than those in many other societies. So, the whole of humankind has to look at this problem. This is what is being done by some of the UN Agencies, some of the NGO women agencies, etc. There is an awakening all over the world about the rights of the woman and the injustices to which she has been subjected over the ages and the need to correct this imbalance. This has happened merely because the society has come to a grinding halt. What are the progresses in those societies, in our societies where half of the population is just chattel and the other half is equal to hundred per cent? This will not continue, this cannot continue. The progress had to come to a grinding halt in all the societies and only then this consciousness be started.

Rajiv Gandhi understood this. We all understood it. He understood this in an active manner. He said, "Why don't we give reservation to women?" We have been running Panchayati Raj. If a woman had to be co-opted in a particular Panchayat or a Panchayat Samiti, it invariably used to be the wife of the Sarpanch. If it had to be a Scheduled Caste man, it invariably used to be the farm servant of the Sarpanch. If it had to be someone from the youth, it had to be the son of the Sarpanch. Whether it was a woman or a Scheduled Caste or a youth or whatever it was, it was the Sarpanch who mattered—the real thing and nobody else. So, it meant that everything was woven around one important person in the village or in the block. Can you call this reservation? Can you call this justice being done? I am talking of 80 to 90 per cent cases, maybe not 100 per cent.

So, we understood this to be something of a sham and not a real story of empowerment and that was why the Constitution had to be changed. There was no other way, you had to pass a law. You pass many laws. In many States laws are in force; they are observed only in breach. So, we had to think of something which was much more than just a change in the law because it was a State subject. The laws could be changed to any extent in States and in some States even that did not happen. Rajiv Gandhi thought we had to go to the law of the laws, the mother of the laws, in order to change the situation. And the mother of the laws is the Constitution. It was there that this had to be done.

In the beginning, newspapers commented all kinds of things. ‘What is this—changing situation for the sake of something which is the State subject completely? Why should we do it? We were not bound to do it. Why should the Central Parliament bother about it?’ But he insisted on doing this, we all understood. Why is it that he was insisting and we brought law? What happened? Law could not be passed. It was defeated in the Rajya Sabha for various reasons. The women and children also became the subject of politics, party-politics. So, the matter ended there. Meanwhile Rajiv Gandhi’s party lost the election. Nothing happened until the party came back and we picked it up. Rajiv Gandhi had died meanwhile in the manner in which we all know. We had to take it up because we were all convinced. That is the right thing to do. Today, my friends tell me—from the States, I mean—they are not able to even believe it.

The other day my old colleagues from Andhra Pradesh came. They said, “Sir, after these elections the Panchayat Samitis, to the Zila Parishad and the local bodies—we are not able to believe our eyes—who have come and who are sitting in the chairs there.” A rickshaw-puller, the rickshaw-puller’s son, a woman who was earning her livelihood in the old villages—far-off villages—*chawal kutnewala*—it is actually pounding rice, —they have been elected—because they were considered to be good people. They

said, "All right, let us do it." There may be a big man or a big lady, the wife of the big man there. They said, "No, we do not want to do that."

I was remembering 1937 elections where a totally unknown person called V.V. Giri, who later became the President of India, defeated the Maharaja of Pithapuram. These are some great examples of democracy at work and these people told me, "Sir, we are not able to believe it." Then I am sure, we also will not be able to believe it. We see what kind of people are now being empowered, what kind of women have been empowered. This is the real revolution, the silent revolution that has taken place in this country. We don't believe it. We don't even feel it, we don't realise it. They said very clearly, "We are going to have a conference of these elected people, you will know the women of this revolution." Now, this has happened.

On the economic side, as I said, after the concept of this *Stridhan* we have really not had any idea of how to empower the women. So, we thought that the best way of doing it was to let her do it herself. There is no way to spoonfeed a person in the matter of her own rights, there is no way of your lecturing in the matter of her own rights to her. So, we said the best place is the post office. The best way is to open an account in her name. In the early stages, I used to go to the villages; in the public meetings I used to say:

*"Ap me se kitne jante hain ki dak khane
me khata bhi khola ja sakta hai."*

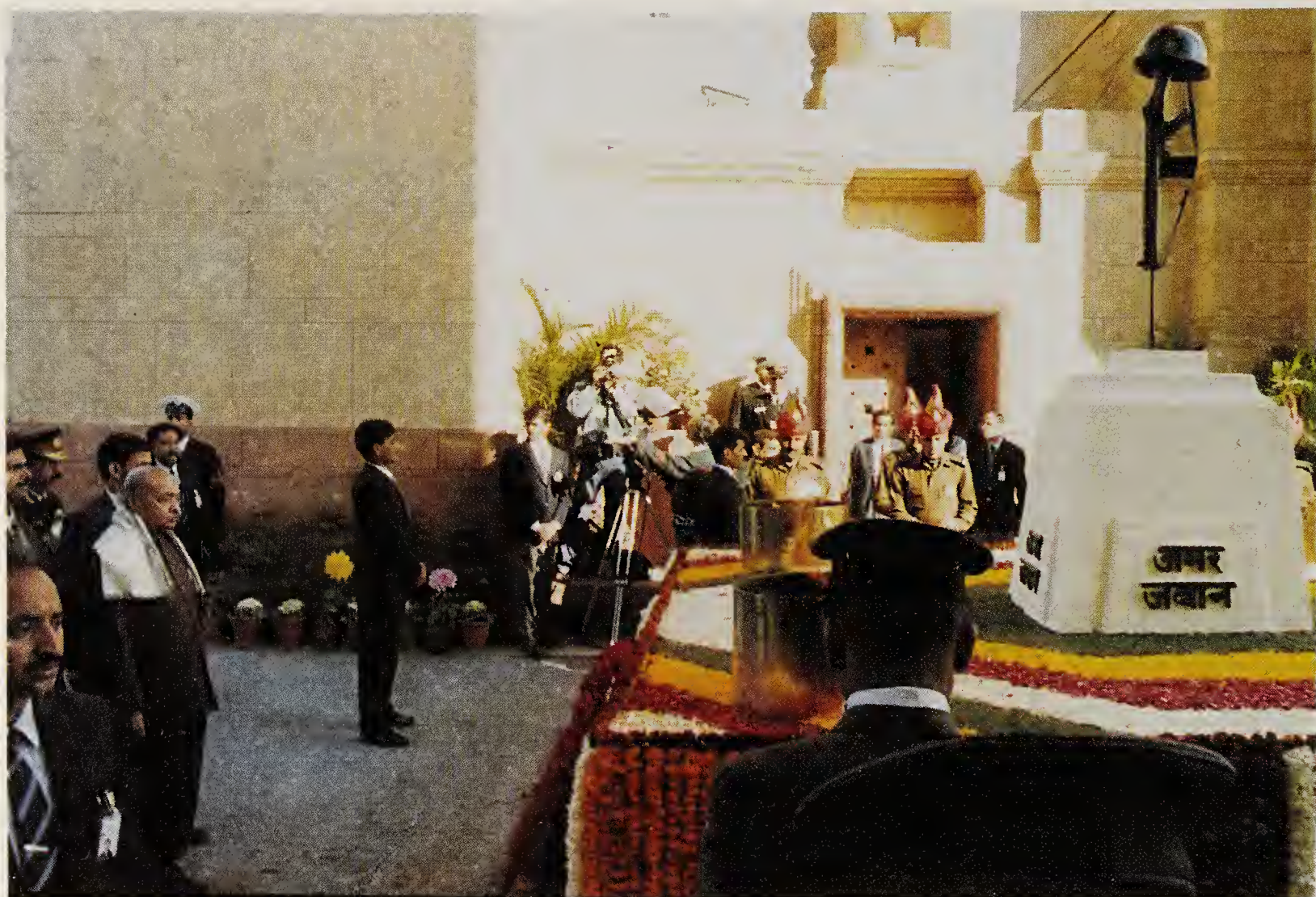
Among the women, nobody raised her hand. They did not know that it was possible to open an account and there is such a thing as a post office. Maybe, there must have been a post office if they looked at from a distance while passing through the street, but nothing beyond that. During the period of 6 or 8 months, I was told that Andhra Pradesh stands first. And among them, women are even



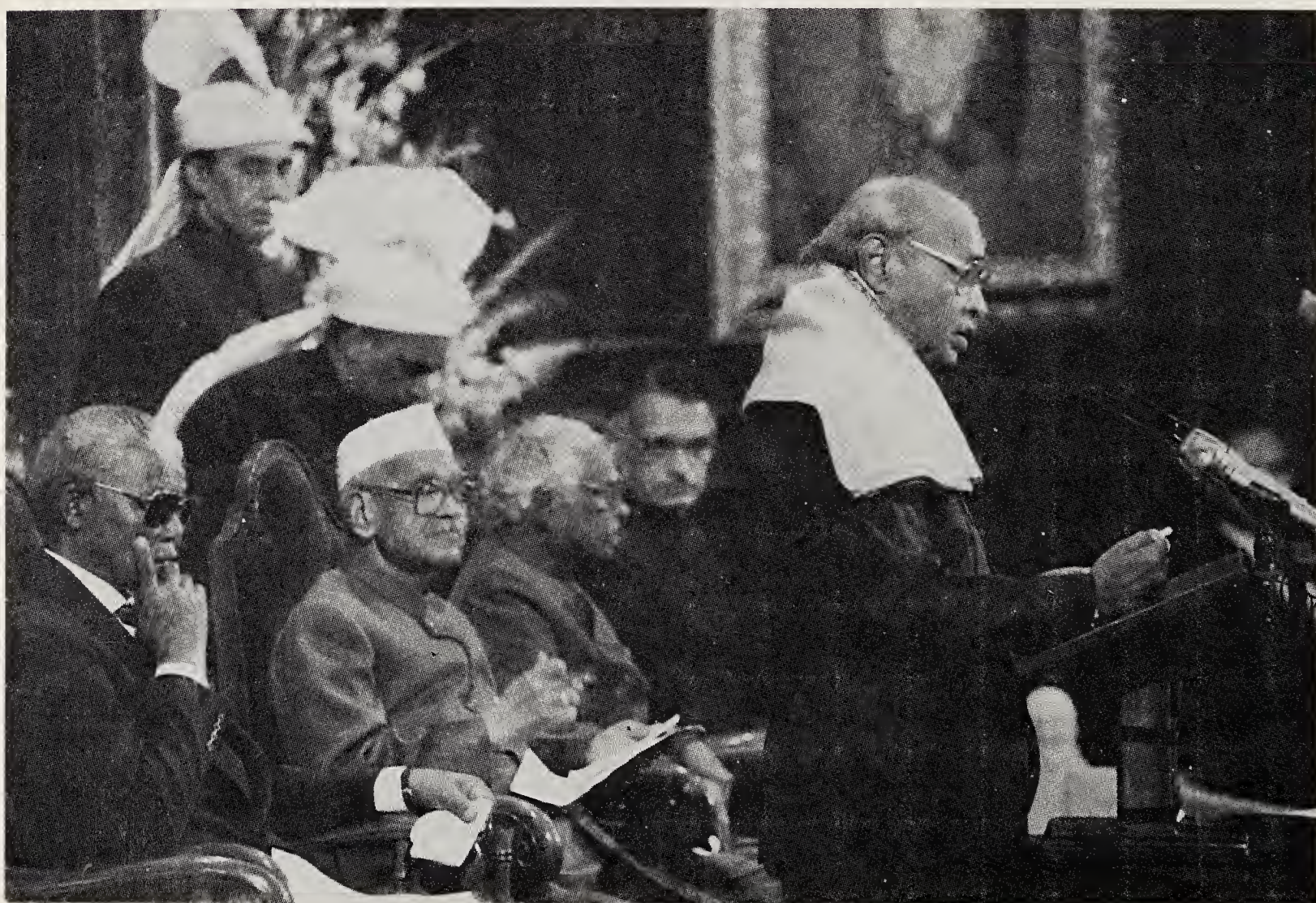
At the inauguration function of the new domestic Terminal Complex of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport, Calcutta, 23 January 1995



With the awardees of National Award for Gallantry for 1994, New Delhi, 25 January 1995



*Paying homage at the Amar Jawan Jyoti, New Delhi,
26 January 1995*



*Speaking on the occasion of unveiling of statue of Pandit
Nehru in Parliament House, New Delhi, 26 January 1995*



*With the former Prime Minister, Shri Morarji Desai,
Bombay, 28 February 1995*



*Presenting the Bharatiya Jnanpith Award to eminent
Kannada writer Prof. U.R. Anantha Murthy,
New Delhi, 25 March 1995*



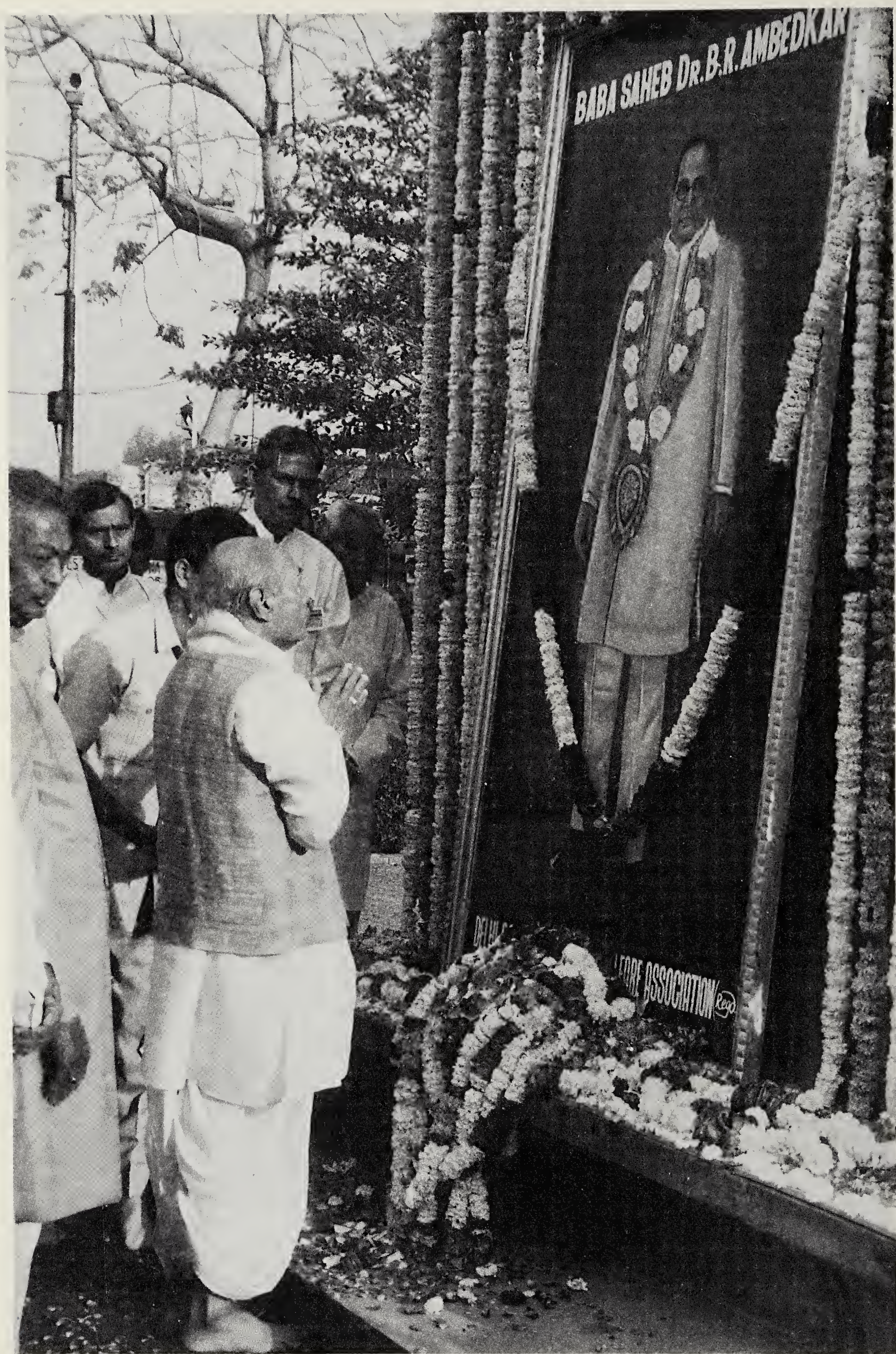
*Inaugurating the Conference of International Chamber of
Commerce, New Delhi, 27 March 1995*



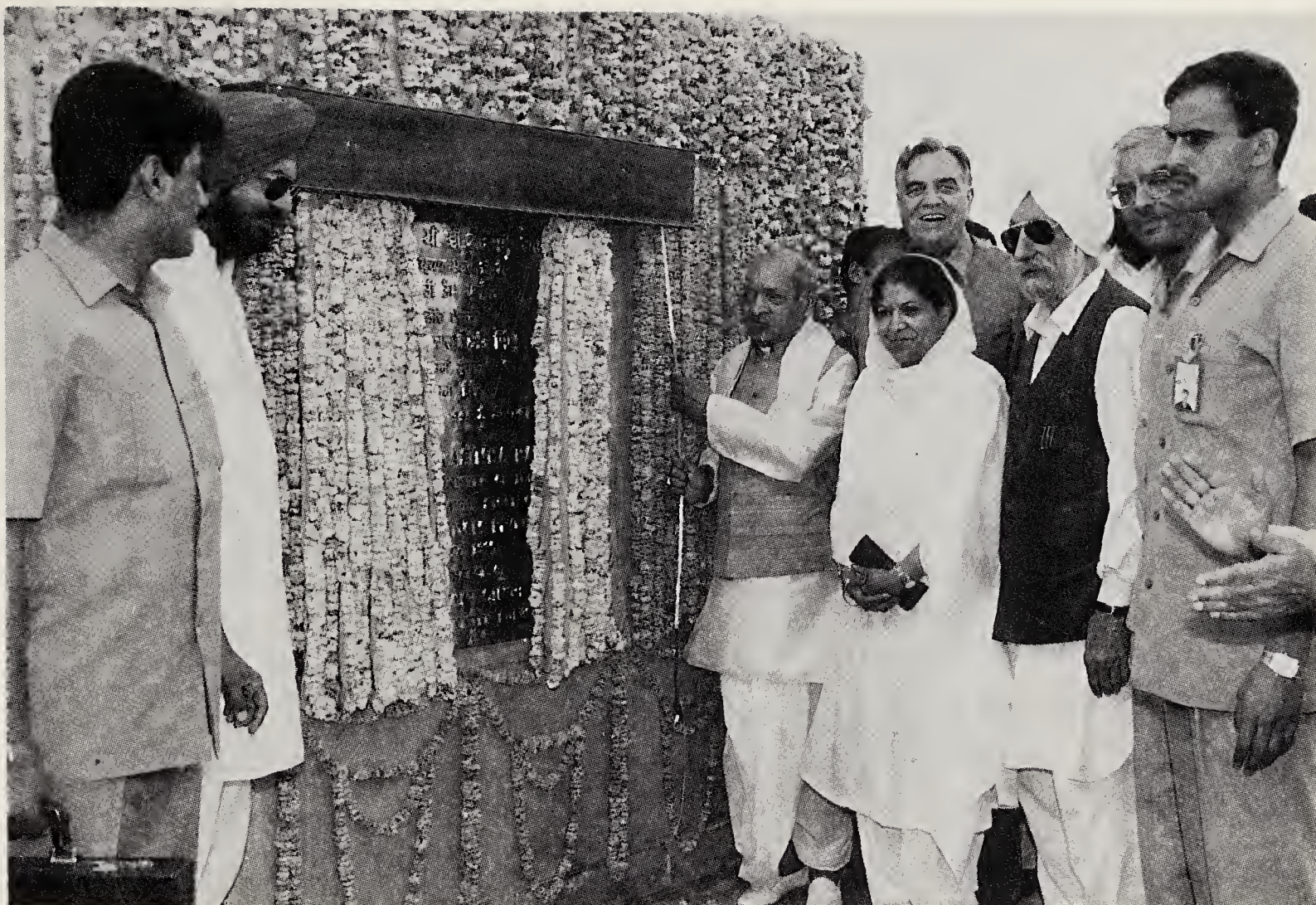
*Drawing lots for the Asia-Oceanic Group Davis Cup ties
between India and the Philippines, New Delhi,
30 March 1995*



*Addressing the XIth Convention of the Indian Association of
Tour Operators, New Delhi, 10 April 1995*



*Paying homage to Babasaheb Dr B.R. Ambedkar on the
occasion of his birth anniversary, New Delhi,
14 April 1995*



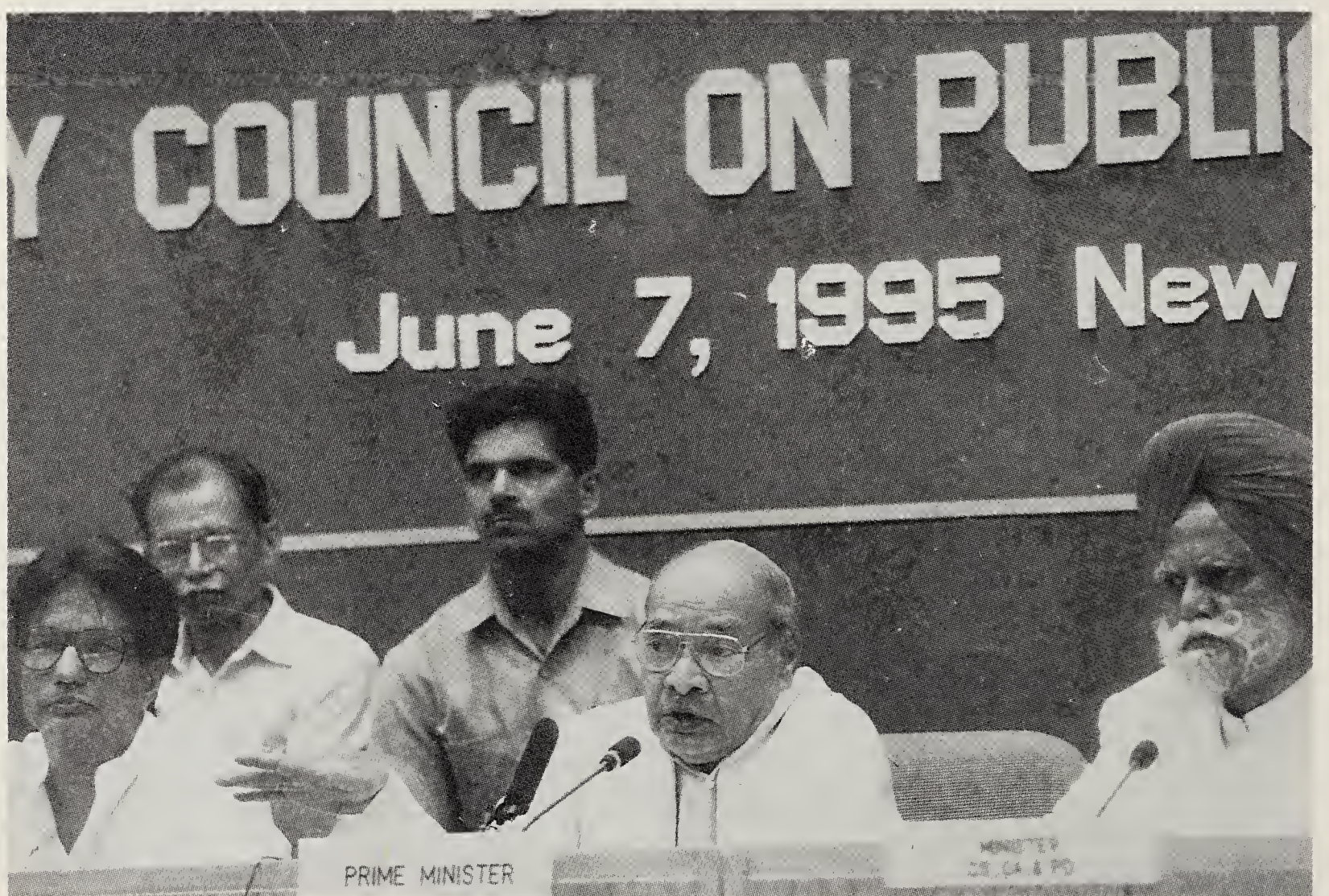
*Unveiling a plaque at the foundation-stone laying ceremony
of Shahpur Kandi Dam project, Gurdaspur district,
Punjab, 20 April 1995*



*Presenting the Mahila Samriddhi Yojana Award, New Delhi,
21 April 1995*



*Delivering his address at Shram Awards presentation ceremony,
New Delhi, 19 May 1995*



*Speaking at the meeting of Advisory Council on Public
Distribution System, New Delhi, 7 June 1995*

more prominent. Among the women who opened the accounts, are women from the tribal areas like Madhya Pradesh and all the other areas. Evidently, they have taken the programmes seriously. It has taken root in those areas and today I find Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh—they started perhaps much earlier than the other States—have done so well.

This reminds me of the importance of the post office. We really do not know the importance of the post office. We take it for granted; it is there. We have the experience of 50 years ago, what we had to do in order to get a post office opened in our villages. I will give you my own example, my own experience in the old days—that was the Princely State. They said, “You cannot have post office unless we get so much of income from post office, we must have so much of income, that is, so much money orders out of which we get commission and that should be a big amount, anything less than that will not do.” So, what we did was, we got the money from different sources, sat in the village, got the money order forms and sent the same money which belonged to our friends back to them by post office and got the commission and ultimately the village was entitled to have a post office. This was the situation 50 or 60 years ago. You compare it with today.

Now, the post office can be made a hub of activity on behalf of the Central Government. Fortunately it is under the Central Government. It is one of the greatest boons that we have in this country. Go to many other countries, you don't like the post office there. You don't have anything like home delivery system where somebody comes with a letter and gives it to you. We come to know about the post office there only when the newspapers say that some letter which was written 20 years ago has reached its destination today. Then the post office comes into the picture, comes to be mentioned; otherwise nobody bothers about the existence of the post office. You only have the post box there. Just like prisoners who are given number, you are given a number, you are given a post office

number and that number has to serve you, no human being ever comes to your door. You will know the value of the post office only when you visit those countries, how difficult how extremely difficult for the people to get in touch with anyone, how to get their posts, nothing comes in time there. I posted a letter from New York telling one of my friends that I was coming on such and such date. I would not like to mention the country. The letter reached there a month after I went there in search of my friends's house. He told me, "I have not received your letter. It is not my fault." He told me one month after I reached India, he received the letter written from New York. This is the condition in some other countries.

Today I have the feeling that we can make the post office the hub of activities at that level. We want more post offices. I am sure the people will go in for more post offices. Once they know the usefulness of the post office they will say, "Why should I walk four miles, why should I walk 4 kilometres to get my post. I want the post office right in my village, right in front of me." And I am sure, Sukh Ramji will have a flood of requests. If this Mahila Samriddhi Yojana and things like useful activities are given to the post office to perform, people will really come and flood him with all these requests. One of these days, I would like to review the working of these post offices. It occurs to me that the post office can become a multi-purpose centre on behalf of the Central Government. It can be the hub of activity on behalf of the Central Government. But now this Mahila Samriddhi Yojana has been completely bracketed with the post office, completely given over to the post office, but as has been pointed out, there should be no dearth of forms, papers, etc. The post offices may also be having their own difficulties. Please look into these to see that the people do not get frustrated because the post office is not giving the service, prompt service, that is needed. This is one of the things the postal people will have to look into at the earliest.

Today what has been achieved is only a very small portion of what I expected to achieve. I thought every woman in this country,

particularly in the villages, in the countryside will have an account in her name. I am not bothered about those who have got accounts of lakhs and crores. I am only talking about those who do not even know that there is the post office, who do not even realise that an account can be opened. We are not giving anything great to them—300 rupees, 200 rupees or one hundred rupees, small amounts bearing some preferential kind of rate of interest.

The idea is that the economic life of that lady, that woman opens up before her in whatever manner she wants to shape it. She can put ten rupees today, take out five rupees tomorrow and give two rupees out of that to her daughter. That kind of thing, the relationship with an economic institution, with a bank, is continuing daily or constantly. After all the post office is just like a bank, a miniature bank, so it is necessary for her to get into this mode of having financial transactions with an institution. This is just an idea, not just the 300 or 200 rupees, although those 300 and 200 can add up to 3000 crores if you make the calculation. Every year, you can get a deposit of 300 crores, it is not a small amount. It can be done. But as Madhavraoji pointed out, it should not be allowed to taper off, that is, all this enthusiasm is only in the beginning. Afterwards everybody forgets about it. Most schemes in this country have tapered off like that. This should not be allowed to happen because this is not a matter of money, this is a matter of consciousness of the women-folk, the consciousness of involvement of the women being kept constantly on the increase and that is the kind of social engineering that we are undertaking by this scheme.

I thank you very much. I am impressed by the amount of work that has been done. But I must say that we have a long long way to go and this is how I look at this conference as the precursor to much better work being done. The Award function is just a shot in the arm to everyone who has been working for it and I once again give you all my best wishes and congratulations.

VI

International Affairs

Enduring Indo-Russian Relationship

I THANK YOU for your warm words of welcome and the kind sentiments you expressed about my country and about me personally. I am deeply honoured to have been given the privilege of addressing this august assembly of elected representatives of the people of Russia. Through you, esteemed Deputies, I convey the fraternal greetings and good wishes of the people of India to their traditional friends, the people of Russia.

Though this is my first visit to the Russian Federation as Prime Minister of India, I am no stranger to your country. Like many of my illustrious predecessors, Moscow has had a special place in my esteem, as the capital of an especially friendly country and of a great power, as well as a symbol of an old and abiding civilization. Today again Moscow is the focal point of a historic transition, the outcome of which will profoundly influence Europe, Asia and the world as a whole.

India and Russia are old friends and our relations are marked by a long tradition of trust, confidence and cooperation. The cultural links between our two countries have been strong and enduring. Dostoievsky had once said, "It would be useful for Russia to forget Petersburg for some time and to turn her soul towards the East." H.S. Lebedev, a Russian musician lived in Calcutta in 1795 and built the 'Bengali Theatre.' He spearheaded Oriental studies in Russian and himself wrote extensively in Bengali and Russian. At the same time appeared the Russian translations of the *Bhagvad Gita* and the classic, *Shakuntalam*. Prof. I.P. Minayev, the greatest of Russian Indologists lived at the same time. He blazed a glorious trail of Sanskrit studies, followed by a galaxy of eminent disciples

like Kudryavsky, Oldenburg etc. to keep up the tradition. Thus, we have a long tradition which makes the friendly feelings which the peoples of our two countries have for each other exemplary in many fields, including international relations today. The Indian people regard Russia as a trusted and reliable friend. It is only natural that we should empathise, and feel a deep sense of kinship, with you at this important juncture of history.

About your great country, I recall the words of Pyotr Tyutchev, the 19th century Russian poet:

“You cannot understand Russia by reason
Or measure her by a common yardstick:
She has her own (particular) way;
You have to believe in Russia.”

On a personal note which is true of thousands of my generation in India, let me say that I have grown up with close fraternal sentiments and slogans at the popular level in India since our adolescence. For a vast majority amongst us, it was not any specific ideological involvement, as such. Rather, it was a peculiar feeling—a feeling of not being alone, although with no one else in particular. It was extremely important to us at that time. Likewise, when the newly-born free nations opened their eyes, they found the world around them rather uncongenial to their freedom. There were the two Power Blocs, one consisting, among others, of the erstwhile colonial powers, and the other, a rather unfamiliar phenomenon with a somewhat familiar halo of egalitarianism. The free nations strained their eyes, as it were, for a moment, took stock of the situation and took the momentous decision not to align with either Bloc, yet trying to be friendly with both. Having waged our freedom struggles invariably in the name of the poor and the downtrodden, and promising the masses a status and standards of living they had never enjoyed before for centuries, it was natural that the sense of egalitarianism which your country then reflected, in a general

way, impressed the deprived masses considerably. Without knowing the details, they found something different—and welcomed. I am sure this will remain a memorable experience for us in that groping era, perhaps never repeated in any other generation since. The experience also led to the strengthening of the Non-Aligned Movement, smoothly, easily, logically.

And now, Russia's evolution into a pluralistic democracy is an event of far-reaching and historical significance. Its implications and consequences extend well beyond Russia's borders; Russia will always remain a major player in the international arena. It is of importance to the rest of the world that Russia takes its rightful place in the world as a prosperous and democratic nation. Russia is entitled to this place not only because of its size, power and natural resources, but also by virtue of the talents and skills of its people, the huge sacrifices which they have made and the proud intellectual and social traditions which they have inherited.

I am conscious of the fact that we are living in a period of transition between the old and the new, with all its attendant uncertainties and expectations, anxieties and hopes. In one sense, we are trying to come out of many of the trials and tribulations of the twentieth century as it draws to a close. Nothing illustrates this as poignantly as the anniversaries to be marked this year and the next of the victory over fascism. Recently, while paying tribute to the Red Army for liberating your country and Europe from fascism, President Yeltsin rightly called it bringing happiness to humanity. The supreme sacrifice made by millions of your countrymen for the cause of peace will never be forgotten. I recall vividly my visit to the Piskariovskoye Memorial in St. Petersburg some years ago. The words of Olga Bergholz inscribed at the memorial that “no one and nothing has been forgotten” have been etched in my memory.

Yet we both know that the best token of remembrance is not a series of retributions, but the successful effort to prevent the causes of confrontation and conflict. In the ultimate analysis, there are no victors in war. The finest tribute we can pay to the memory of the great men and women who made great sacrifices is to work together for a resurrection of hope and faith in our common destiny as one humanity. Let this be our pledge to future generations.

President Yeltsin and I signed a Declaration yesterday in which we noted the positive developments in recent years and also the new challenges that have emerged in the post-cold war period. Democracy is taking root in many countries and regions. This is a positive factor, not only in the realisation of popular aspirations, but for the consolidation of world peace. Peace can come to the world permanently only when the people at large in all countries, who can always be depended upon to sue for peace, have a decisive say in the affairs of States; in other words, democracy everywhere is the only unfailing guarantee for peace everywhere. Democracies speak the same language, namely, the language of peace, no matter what languages the people speak. But history has demonstrated that democracy needs to be protected with vigilance and nursed with care, since it is over time that democratic norms and conduct assume the majesty of tradition and become a way of life. And until this happens, democracy is never secure.

The safeguarding of human rights of all is a logical and inexorable concomitant of democracy. Among these rights is the freedom of expression, of choice as well as the freedom of dissent. In our pluralist system, dissent is a part of the healthy functioning of democratic institutions. We do not believe in the deadening conformity of thought and action. We believe that Peter Chaadaev was right when he said over one and a half centuries ago that “modern society has progressed solely through thought, its interests have always followed, and never preceded, ideas” and that “man sought the truth and found freedom and prosperity.” Thus we do

not regard dissent as discord, but as a measure of the maturity of the socio-political processes in our country. In fact, we welcome the expression of differences as long as it does not, in the process, disrupt the rules of the very game that we are playing.

We do not believe that any one model of democracy can lay claim to superiority, let alone infallibility. But we do believe that the guiding principles of democratic societies are common to all of them—equality and non-discrimination, freedom of choice, adherence to the rule of law, secularism and tolerance. Democracy is incompatible with any form of exclusivism or intolerance. As Mahatma Gandhi had noted, “If we want to cultivate a true spirit of democracy, we cannot afford to be intolerant. Intolerance betrays a want of faith in one's cause.”

As large countries with a rich and vibrant diversity in ethnicity, religions and languages, India and Russia have shared interests in sustaining secularism, tolerance and non-discrimination. Though the Constitutions of India and Russia were adopted at different times and in different circumstances, it is not accidental that they contain these common principles. We thus have a stake in protecting our societies and systems from sectarian violence, religious intolerance and extremism, terrorism and organised crime. The geopolitical situation of our two countries enhances our interests in combating these new threats in the post-cold war era, which has to become a conflict-free era now.

In particular, as large and heterogeneous states, India and Russia face common challenges and seek to overcome them in similar ways. We both value these myriad diversities, which contribute so richly to the social and cultural framework and way of life of our peoples. These differences do not inhibit us, but on the contrary, make an essential contribution to the unity and integrity of our countries, as well as to the consensus which exists on all issues of national importance. This unity in diversity gives added strength to our polities.

Both India and Russia embarked on the path of economic reforms at around the same time. In India, however, our economy had over the centuries been dealing with market forces. After our independence, we successfully developed a mixed economy which proved its efficacy and remains relevant. Our recently initiated reforms are aimed at making our economy more market-oriented and competitive in the world and integrated more closely with the global economy. We cannot afford to remain frozen in our attitudes. Yet the path chosen by us has been evolutionary, albeit with enhanced speed. We have not borrowed new dogmas or prescriptions. We have not followed any model, nor do we represent any universally applicable model. We continue to believe what Jawaharlal Nehru said during a visit to Moscow in June 1955 that whatever the pattern of development a country might choose, “each country and people are conditioned by their own past and by the experience they go through... They can grow only if they develop their own strength and self-reliance and maintain their own integrity.” We recognise the fact that sustainable growth can only be based on social stability, the basis of which is equitable benefit for all sections of our society and balanced development of our different regions. We have kept this cardinal principle constantly in view while pressing ahead with our reforms.

Since 1980, this is my ninth visit to Moscow. On earlier occasions, I had visited Moscow in various Ministerial capacities. But on every occasion, including this, my visits to your country have been as a Member of the Indian Parliament. Despite the rich mosaic of political diversity in both our Parliaments, all Parliamentarians in both our countries are committed to the further strengthening of the traditional ties of friendship between India and Russia. I am sure that regular and frequent Parliamentary exchanges will strengthen the bonds of friendship between our countries.

From each visit to your great country, I return home with a fresh sense of optimism and renewed hope for the future and

faith in endeavour. I take this opportunity of wishing you success in your important tasks of nation building.

Abiding Indo-Vietnam Friendship

I AM DEEPLY moved by the warmth and graciousness of your welcome. Thank you for your kind words and for the hospitality shown to me and my delegation. I am delighted to be back again amongst my Vietnamese friends after over a decade. It is an honour to be with a people who so bravely preserved their independence through the turbulent vicissitudes of history.

On coming here, I am more than ever aware of the strength and continuity of the relationship between the peoples of India and Vietnam. As two ancient nations, we have deep moorings in our respective cultural development, where we have given and taken much from each other. The Cham monuments dotting the landscape of central and southern Vietnam are a testimony to our age-old historical and cultural contacts. In modern times, our leaders inspired and drew strength from each other in their struggle against colonialism and foreign domination. Ho Chi Minh and Jawaharlal Nehru together laid the foundations of the close and friendly relations which we enjoy today.

Today, the world is looking at Vietnam with new eyes, as it goes through momentous changes in its economic orientation. Rapid economic transformation has been brought about in a setting of political stability and orderly social development. This is a

reflection of the maturity and wisdom of its leadership and the dedication and discipline of the Vietnamese people. As close and long-standing friends of Vietnam, we wish you success in your endeavour to provide economic growth and prosperity to your great nation.

India, too embarked upon a process of far-reaching economic reforms three years ago. In the early years of our independence, our policies concentrated on building up our economic base virtually from scratch, at the same time addressing the complex and inescapable social needs of our large population. We have since proceeded with a policy of economic liberalisation that attempts to build upon the strong agricultural and industrial base that has been created. Reforms have been introduced in a systematic manner and at a pace that should minimise their adverse effects on the more vulnerable sections of our society, at the same time providing many new opportunities to our people for growth and prosperity. We take great satisfaction from the success recorded by the liberalisation policy, which has attracted strong support at home and abroad.

The reforms put into effect by both our countries provide substantial new opportunities for enhanced bilateral interaction particularly in regard to private enterprise projects. It should be the endeavour of both sides to take advantage of the new economic environment. We, on our part, are fully ready to be a partner in Vietnam's development. We hope to see major bilateral projects which will serve the interests of both and give an economic content to our relations commensurate with our traditionally close and friendly ties.

Peace and stability are essential prerequisite for economic development. In this context, we welcome initiatives taken by Vietnam for creating a climate of trust and understanding among countries of the region. We believe that closer interaction and links between Vietnam and the ASEAN are an important component for

peace and stability in the South-East Asian region. In this context, we welcome Vietnam's forthcoming membership of the ASEAN as a positive and significant development. In our own region, we are determined to continue our efforts to promote good neighbourly relations and to expand the process of cooperation in South Asia with the objective of making it, an area of peace, friendship and cooperation.

As fellow nations of Asia our two countries are conscious of the emerging status of Asia in a changing world. This new, dynamic Asia, the most vigorously advancing portion of the planet, can draw upon centuries-old traditions of peace, amity, tolerance and harmony and provide a stabilising influence in international affairs. It will be India's privilege, in this context, to extend its partnership with Vietnam into the 21st century, on a new path of peace and prosperity. We have stood by each other in the past, and we will remain partners in the future as well. We are confident of the success of your own endeavours as much as ours in economic and social reconstruction, and we look forward to a still closer relationship between India and Vietnam in the years to come.

Enormous Scope in India for NRI Investment

I AM HAPPY to see a galaxy of Indian talent, Indian businessmen, Indian entrepreneurs and of course non resident Indians here. I was told that they come from all walks of life—intellectuals, academics, businessmen and so on. That is how it should be, because Indians

have gone into far off lands for various reasons. Some went only as labours as you know, indentured labours during the British period. They have made those countries their homes. They have done extremely well in whatever they touched, whatever line they chose and today they are running the governments. They are very important part of the governments of those countries and one feels proud that our brethren who went about a century, a couple of centuries earlier are today in the top rungs of the society in those far off lands.

We in India look upon you as our kith and kin, our blood and wherever you are, we wish you well. Wherever you are, whatever you are doing, we wish you to prosper. We wish you to bring name and fame to the country of your origin. You are loyal citizens of the areas where you live, the countries where you live in. At the same time the most significant feature of those of Indian origin is that they don't forget their origin. This is what we really rejoice and I have seen in dozens and dozens of countries, Indian community or the community with Indian origin having a kind of cohesion which is very difficult to find in other societies. They have their cultural roots firmly planted in India and they also have live contacts and relationship—current relationships, marriages and so on with India. I am proud of this and I am happy about this and I would like you to continue this.

For about three years or a little more, we have introduced a new regime of economic reforms. This, I think, you would be very interested in knowing because this has opened up India, this has depicted India overseas in new light. This is not really new in the sense that it was not there earlier. In fact the idea of liberalisation started when Indira Gandhi was Prime Minister, partly, and, in fact to a large extent it was developed when Rajivji was Prime Minister. What we have done is to quicken the pace, to accelerate and take on the challenge within the shortest possible time. Maybe, it could have taken five or ten years otherwise but what we have thought that on a full consideration of pros and cons if there is to be a reform, it has

to be brought in within the shortest possible period, not allowing it over decades and decades because it will lose its impact and it will run into more and more rough weather. This was a bold approach which we undertook. It runs risks but we have to take risks and nothing can be done in life without taking risks. It was a calculated risk and we came to conclusion that we cannot really do anything tangible by a slow process. So we have to be comparatively much quicker.

There are of course views, we could have been even quicker than what we have been. At home, we have some people who hold this view and of course on the opposite side there are people who hold the view that we have been going at breakneck speed. They predict that our neck will be broken any moment. Thank God, we have not broken our neck. Nor we have landed in any insurmountable difficulty. Difficulties have been there; you cannot expect a process like that without difficulties, without hurdles, without lot of criticisms coming from all quarters, particularly in Parliament. In a democratic system, this has to be expected. We expected this. We anticipated it. At the same time we were not really rushing into something unknown. The criticism was well conceived. We welcomed the criticism because that gave us the idea of what really needs to be done in order to see that the people do not misunderstand policy. And in a democracy if people misunderstand a policy, no policy can prosper—that goes without saying.

So it was important for us to bring in changes, and at the same time to convince the people that these changes eventually were for their good and not for the good of few people coming from outside or being sent from outside. This was the most difficult task. This had to be done with a certain amount of finesse because you cannot go and talk to the people in an overbearing manner. You have to talk to them in a language that they understand. I am not talking of the language they can not understand but in the language they understand. You will have to go from the known to the unknown. We have

to start with what they know and then go on to explain to them what they perhaps do not know without telling that they don't know. No one wants to be told that they do not know. That is how it is.

So far, two-and-a-half to three years, this has been going on along with the reform measures one after the other. And I have been at very great pains to make ordinary people understand what we really want to do, what we have to do inevitably in the situation which we face.

We have the 'Mixed Economy' fortunately propounded by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. I have had the good fortune of seeing him from close quarters, watching him and learning from him to the extent of course one can. He was a great thinker. He was a great strategist also. There was a time when ideas of centralised Planning were invading India, invading the best minds in India from all quarters. Panditji stood firm and said, there is a limit beyond which you cannot really regulate the minds of people. So we said it has to be an economy which does not kill individuality and at the same time does not become an atrocity, an obsession. This was the 'Mix' we had. And this was called 'Mixed Economy'.

We have the public sector. We have the private sector. The entire agricultural activity in India has been in the private sector, as you know. Indian farmers come in all sizes—big, small, medium and so on but we had land reforms which brought down the size of the holdings and today the Green Revolution in India has been brought not by a few landlords but by the millions and millions of small and medium farmers dotting the country. So Panditji's insistence on keeping agriculture, retaining agriculture in the private sector has had this wonderful effect that for twenty-five years now, we have been self-sufficient in foodgrains. In the next two or three years, I assure you that even in case of edible oil for which we have to depend on imports from some countries close to Singapore we will become equally self-sufficient and that has resulted in diversifying our

economic cooperation programmes with those countries. It is not that everything is going to stop. If we do not buy oil, and if we feel self-sufficient, we will buy something else. We will have lots of other areas in which we do want to pursue with economic cooperation with those countries.

Again coming to the industrial field. Panditji retained both—the private and the public sectors. When I go to some countries, I find that they do not know what a bank is, what banking is? How to run a shop? These are sometimes unbelievable but this is true. In some countries, they told me in so many words—‘we just do not know how to run a shop.’ Now in India thank God and thanks to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, we know all this plus we know something of Central Planning. We have done it successfully. Please don't believe anyone who tells you that the public sector in India has been a failure. No. It has been a success, it has helped the private sector to an extent which is unimaginable and both the sectors have been working side by side strengthening each other.

We accomplished a stage where we can involve our own brethren abroad, foreign investors, Indian investors and we can take freely whatever comes for various important sectors of the economy which we think are a priority with our Planning. This is what we are doing. Lot of investment is coming. Eighty per cent of that investment, you will be glad to know, is in the infrastructure sector. We are not going in for only consumer goods, we have lot of consumer goods industries in India and if we can help it, we would not like too much of consumer goods industries coming to India. We can improve the industries within India. We can have lot of tie ups for many other things but essentially what we really need is infrastructure. We want power, we want telecommunications, we want steel, we want cement—everything. Even in the case of steel and cement we really do not need anyone from outside to set up industries. Industries will expand in due course. We will see that it expands by itself on its own stream.

So we are at a very interesting stage in the development of Indian economy where we can absorb technology, the highest kinds of technology; whatever the sophistication of the technology we need it, we will have it and will absorb it. We do not want to unduly run after only technology because we have a lot of stakes in employment. We want technology which encourages employment because we do not want to throw people out of their employments. We have millions and millions and it is not like smaller countries, where population being limited they have to think of more and more sophisticated methods of saving labour. While in India, we have to employ them, we have to be labour intensive. So subject to these very important principles, we are expanding and expanding fast.

I have come here to tell you what you already know. I am sure, that there is an enormous scope for you all to cooperate with India. I have got this response from many other countries, particularly our NRIs have done extremely well in helping India wherever we needed the help. I am grateful to them, of course, in a family who is grateful to whom, we do not really say *Shukriya* for everything. It is not in our nature. When we mean it, we say it and we do say it to our friends, our people abroad. Our own kith and kin abroad have done extremely well to help us and we do feel that they deserve our gratitude. At the same time we would like this to continue. We would like diversification. We would like industry. We would like the cultural relations, cultural ties with India—your cultural ties with India, to continue and also to be strengthened and that can be done in a variety of ways.

I understand there are people here representing associations, cultural associations, literary associations and so on. Now this again is an activity which our Indian brethren have continued rather robustly wherever they have gone. I have seen the literary works of our people from other countries which are in no way inferior to what is produced in India, in some respects I have the courage to say, that I would like to say that what is written in those countries by our

brethren in spite of the fact that they have lost touch for a long time with the languages and culture of their origin—their writings are better. Because they have got varied experience which a writer in India, back home doesn't have. So I find a kind of freshness, a kind of comprehensiveness in the writings of those who have really attempted literary works, those who are of Indian origin and have settled in other countries. I can give you examples. I used to read when I was Foreign Minister. I had the time to read poetry, short stories, novels, essays and whatever was written by important people of Indian origin settled abroad. We have a very high standard which they have established there. And they are, equal to their peers in all fields, particularly in cultural fields.

So this is again another area which needs to be fostered, which needs to be properly maintained and a lots of things are happening in India in the languages. I don't want any of you to become out of date nor our Indian authors etc. to become out of date. But there is one thing that I have seen. When I went to Mauritius, I found that the Telugu speaking people in Mauritius is not a very large community, it is a small community but they have preserved the songs, the folk songs and the poems which I heard when I was about ten years old. But later I never heard them. They have preserved this. They gave me two three cassettes. And I think they are some of the best treasures I have. I do not find them being sung anywhere, recited anywhere in Andhra Pradesh—even by the older people. But they have carried this and I am sure not only in Telugu, in all the languages they have carried the literature which was popular about hundred years ago, about eighty years ago, about twenty years ago.

I am sure, the Bhojpuri songs in Mauritius went there not less than hundred and forty, hundred and fifty years ago. They are still there. They are being preserved meticulously there. They do not find a place in Bhojpuri of today but they have been preserved very well in Mauritius. This has happened in many other countries and we are happy that all that is coming back to us. We exported it

hundred years ago, we are importing it today. I gave those cassettes to friends in Andhra Pradesh who were delighted to have them. In fact, they said, 'this kind of thing is not available today.' So this is how it is the give and take, the traffic in both directions is something which enriches culture, enriches our literature, enriches all the genius which we have adapted in literature.

I thank you very much for the turnout here which I find consists of top people in their own respective spheres, fields of action. I wish you all the best and I also wish you the kind of progress kind of prosperity in which we have a stake. India itself has a stake in your prosperity because we have a stake in our combined, common future.

India and the Asia-Pacific—a New Relationship

I AM GRATEFUL to my friend and senior statesman Lee Kuan Yew for his kind remarks. This is truly a historic moment for all of us, not merely in a temporal, but in a historical sense. Although my own association with South-East Asia and Singapore goes back to a decade-and-a-half, the ties that bind India and South-East and East Asia are so old that they are still being fully traced by historians, who increasingly have to take the assistance of archaeologists.

Singapore has graciously hosted Alamkara, an exposition titled "Five Thousand Years of India." It was conceived as a presentation not merely of the ancient Indian civilization but a

Speech on "India and the Asia-Pacific: Forging a New Relationship" at the Institute of South-East Asian Studies, Singapore, 8 September 1994

reaffirmation of the ties that bound our ancestors together. You may be interested to know that even the name of your city is very common in India and I know at least two villages with the same name close to my own. And I myself carry part of your city in my own name. I am sure, you cannot think of another guest so closely identified with you.

I was, therefore, not a little perplexed when I faced the task of drafting an address to this distinguished gathering on the 'new relationship' India is forging with the Asia-Pacific. I suppose the connotation has something to do with the fact that in Asia, the industrial and technological revolution was heralded only late in this century, but the advances in development have been so rapid in the recent decades or even years that it would be fair to say that it is not the reality that is changing, but change which is becoming a reality.

So let us address this seeming paradox of the 'new relationship'. In 1941, a little before he died, the great Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore had this to say in his work, "The Crisis of Civilization":

"I had at one time believed that the springs of civilization would issue out of the heart of Europe. But today when I am about to quit the world, that faith has gone bankrupt altogether... And yet, I shall not commit the grievous sin of losing faith in Man ... I would rather look forward to the opening of a new chapter in his history, after the cataclysm is over and the atmosphere rendered clean with the spirit of service and sacrifice. Perhaps that dawn will come from this horizon, from the East where the sun rises."

After the cataclysm of the Second World War, we have continued to see much turbulence through the period of the cold war, which dominated political and strategic perceptions. By the end of that struggle, by 1992, Jane's Defence Weekly had identified a total of 73 hot-spots worldwide, including ongoing and potential conflicts.

Asia has had its share of troubles, apart from the continuing suffering and humiliation we had to put up with during the phase of our colonial history. Permit me another quote which reads as follows :

“But there is yet another spirit of Asia today. As we all know, Asia is no longer passive today; it had been passive enough in the past—it is no more a submissive Asia... It has tolerated submissiveness for so long. Asia of today is dynamic.”

These words were spoken by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru not far from here, at the Asian-African Conference in Bandung in April, 1955. It is remarkable how true and relevant these words continue to be today.

We cannot ignore the fact that while the world has become a smaller place, thanks largely to the technologies of travel and telecommunications, the hiatus between regions, nations and even communities, may be said to have increased in one sense. If ideological rigidities have been jettisoned or at least largely muted, with the end of the cold war by most of the contenders, new barriers are in evidence, in the form of tariff and non-tariff walls, immigration laws, cartelisation of technological capabilities to ensure domination over nations which are slightly behind in the race, and several other ingenious innovations. It seems ironical that man has changed everything except his own mind and proclivities. The reason, too, is not far to seek. It is much easier to change dead matter than to alter mental attitudes formed over many centuries, even millennia. In any event, while the effort to transform matter has been massive and continuous, a matching effort to adapt the human mind so as to be in tune with material changes has not been undertaken, except in a very few awakened societies.

It takes a good deal of statesmanship to proceed on the path of nation building on democratic lines while ensuring that the nation remains a worthy member of the international community. The

problems are both endogenous and exogenous. In the first category fall :

(i) The massive challenges of development : In cases such as India's feeding, clothing and educating hundreds of millions whose eyes have still to adjust to the bright light of the twentieth century, and who are already being rushed into the mysterious twenty first;

(ii) The challenge to human values thrown up everywhere by rapid changes. Prime Minister Goh alluded to this last month in his speech on Singapore's National Day, when he stated:

“But societies change. They change with affluence, with technology, with politics. Sometimes changes are for the better but sometimes changes make a society lose its vitality, its solidarity, make a people soft and decline...”

(iii) The emergence of an attitude which seeks to define an individual's social and increasingly political, identity more on ethnic, religious and sometimes geographical lines, with the pernicious motivation of organising forces for ostensibly economic, but in reality for political and even personal ends.

In the latter, exogenous category, some of the main elements which I could identify are :

(i) The temptation, to which several political elites increasingly tend to succumb, of blaming their own internal problems, some of which I have just outlined, entirely on supposed events or attitudes abroad;

(ii) Friction between cultures. Although I would not go so far as to subscribe to the thesis that we are seeing a clash between Western and non-Western civilizations, there are unmistakable ‘fault lines’ in some parts of the world, which are still to be repaired. This could,

and sometimes does, lead to the export and import of fundamentalism and the assertion that religion has some overriding transnational and supra-sovereign validity. This dangerous theory needs to be contained effectively;

(iii) The increasing tendency on the part of dominant powers today to assume that they cannot only define the means, but even the ends, of collective international endeavour. This has been revealed to us in recent years in the form of intrusive prescriptions in the areas of social regulation, dissemination of knowledge, technical development and even domestic administration. The worst part of this tendency is that on closer scrutiny, it can be easily shown to be based on unsympathetic half-knowledge, and not unoften even total ignorance;

(iv) Worldwide criminal networks of drug smugglers, terrorists, money launderers and other such elements who have no stake in peace and real prosperity but manage to suborn Governments to ensure the furtherance of their own interests.

I have dwelt at some length on these global issues before I come to the Asia-Pacific. This is because I sincerely believe that the nations that comprise the Asia-Pacific today must address these problems in their totality; because this region, if it can be referred to as a region, encompasses well over half the world's population and wealth and is today primary source of the dynamism that impels global activity.

The Asia-Pacific region is rather loosely defined, I understand. While organisations such as APEC and ARF have membership based more or less on geographic criteria, there can be no gainsaying that political and economic imperatives have mainly contributed to the process of the coming together of these nation-states.

The constitution and the vitality of these fora speak well of the diplomatic and political maturity of the concerned Governments. The issues are formidable:

- interpretations of sovereignty, whether over the oceans, in outer space, over territory, resources etc.;
- frictions arising out of differing cultural perceptions as we witnessed in the case of Michael Fay;
- massive needs and demands of relatively underdeveloped populations and migratory tendencies, with no respect for national boundaries;
- confrontational postures on a broad range of fundamental issues related to trade barriers, currency stabilisation, international aid and investment flows;
- intensification of the debate over linkages between issues such as human rights, labour laws, environmental protection and resource management, liberal information flows etc. in political and economic relationship.

The Asia-Pacific region is fairly disparate in levels of economic development and physical size of the constituent states, as also in terms of political attitudes, given the incredible racial, ethnic and religious diversity of its populations.

While India has been observing the Asia-Pacific drama objectively, we cannot ignore the fact that our civilizations are organically linked to those which have founded so many of the nation-states of East and South-East Asia. The evidence lies in the temples of Java, Indo-China and Thailand, in the manifestations of the great religions of Buddhism and Hinduism that spread across this vast continent, and more aptly today, in the physical origin of ASEAN and other countries of the Asia-Pacific region. In these communities, living here in peace with others, we have a true example of the Asian symbiosis.

But we must look beyond our own continent and you have started doing so. With the organisational bonds you have established with Australia, New Zealand, Canada, USA and some of the Latin American countries, Asia has transcended the boundaries that were imposed by the Pacific. These boundaries were not merely physical but psychological and political. Enlightened leadership of the region have realised that cooperation is fully compatible with healthy competition. If I may quote Pandit Nehru's Bandung speech again:

“We send our greetings to Australia and New Zealand. And, indeed, Australia and New Zealand are almost in our region... They are next to us and I should like, indeed, Australia and New Zealand to come nearer to Asia.”

I repeat, these words were spoken in 1955 by a man who almost had an intuition of the Asia-Pacific as it evolves today.

While in those days, the cold war was at its peak, and therefore, the superpowers were looked upon with some caution mixed with suspicion, it is gratifying to note that the ASEAN can today speak from a position of strength at the same table with the US, Russia, China and Japan. The equations have, indeed, altered. While one cannot deny the overwhelming military superiority of the United States, one cannot ignore the significant military development of China, Japan and Australia. The stakes in the Asia-Pacific region are, indeed, high. They involve rights of passage through crucial water-ways, security of navigation from piracy, claims over disputed lands, maritime zones and resources and hostilities through history that have been defused but not dispelled.

Recently, there have been attempts to depict India along with China and Japan as a potential power which could fill the vacuum created by the withdrawal of the US with the end of the cold war. This theory was partially rejected by American and South-East

Asian strategic thinkers and even in the Australian Senate report of 1991. George Tanham, in the essay titled "Indian Strategic Thought" prepared for the US Department of Defence in 1991 stated:

"India retains a long term unshakeable commitment to strategic independence and autonomy in its decision-making and military capabilities, although its economic industrial, and technical shortcomings continue to limit the success of such a strategic design..."

It is these shortcomings which we are striving to remove with single-minded attention.

India could well appear as large enigma located between an interactive Asia-Pacific and somewhat unclear west-Central Asian attempts at regional integration. This is understandable. But there is no cause whatever for the alarmist views propounded about India's alleged expansionist designs, or its blue water Navy. On any basis of rational and impartial comparison, it will be crystal clear that India has not coveted any land or other asset belonging to any other country, leave alone having any expansionist design through military might. Indeed, India has been an oft-invaded land throughout its history. I do not know what a Prime Minister should feel about this, but I am citing it as an undeniable fact.

In the first place, it is difficult to conceive of a Navy that does not sail in blue waters, by any one's definition. I hardly need to describe in this gathering, the magnitude of India's territory; the distance of its island territories from the main land; its maritime boundaries which are demarcated with those of ASEAN; and the enormous resource base which has to be protected, whether it be our fisheries, offshore oil and gas or even under-sea mineral deposits in the area we have been allotted in the Indian Ocean as pioneer investor recognised under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Any country's strategic policy can be analysed in terms of its interests, intentions and infrastructure. India's interests are patent. A careful study of the past 50 years will convince anyone that India has, in fact, been subjected to considerable burdens on account of migrations of populations, terrorist attacks, smuggling and so forth. Our interests lie in peace and harmony which will enable us to improve our standards of living. Our intentions are also evident from our recent policies, as also the fact that in terms of per capita expenditure and as a percentage of GDP, our defence expenditure is perhaps among the lowest of any country that contains an armed capability even half our size. The Australian Senate Report of 1991 has also concluded that India does not have the capability of sustained force projection far beyond its boundaries and capability reflects intention.

Having said this, I must add that, while India can be said to have been confined to its own strategic defence, this does not detract from its ability and willingness to exercise its role in global affairs. Our armed forces have participated in peace keeping operations from Cambodia to Congo and have recently shed blood in Somalia. We have not shrunk from our commitment to the cause of global peace and we shall not do so in future. At the same time we do not accept any agenda that seeks peace at the cost of any country's self-respect. We are willing to contribute troops to a UN standby force but would reserve the right to object to the deployment of such forces under circumstances that would make such deployment look like that of an aggressor. I have only reiterated what I consider our firm policy. I also think that the Non-Aligned Movement is fully relevant today except in the minds of those who see no self-respect in it and seek to predicate it only in terms of the existence of rival blocs. In point of fact, however, its principles have not really been diluted by the recent strategic changes—we continue with the determination to decide our own destiny, independently according to our lights and to ensure genuine international consensus on matters that concern the world community.

This view may be supported by some, rejected by others. Indeed, the approach adopted in the ARF may well contribute to overall regional security. For this to happen, however, there must be a thorough consensus among all the powers, big or small who have a stake. Security cannot be compartmentalised when the global reach of weapons and the scope for rapid deployment of forces has increased to the point where the threat of armed intervention and conflict can never be ruled out, in any part of the world, and where the struggle for sovereignty over territory and resources is getting more and more acute.

India's preoccupation with economic development and its determination to withstand the onslaught of inimical internal and external forces, have together wrought a political economy which has a self-respecting GDP and a technological base which is the envy of many other countries. But as the second most populous country in the world, India's special problems need to be noted carefully, before prescription of unsuitable models of development are accepted without adequate fore-thought.

India's economic imperatives should be seen both in short-term and long-term perspectives. Right now, the necessity of massive investments in infrastructure loom large. We need huge investments in power, oil, telecommunications, fertilizers and, of course, agriculture and irrigation, apart from roads, railways and ports. I have come to extend my hand of partnership in this adventure—a partnership having so much in common, and so close already in multifaceted cooperation. Investment is coming from several industrialised countries already. My present endeavour is to draw, as much as possible investment and cooperation from the Asia-Pacific countries, in consonance with our common concept and solidarity and my faith in our common destiny. This, of course, will bring large-scale employment to India's young people at different levels—skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled.

When we in India take employment in the long-term perspective, the question of the right technology confronts us. If we take to gigantism in order to attain the economies of scale, we accept increasingly sophisticated technology which in many cases, replaces man with machine, accentuating unemployment and imposing unacceptable social costs in a populous country. On the other hand, if we accept the route of large-scale employment with old technology and low wages, the large mass of people, as well as their economic activity, including the product thereof, remain at an unacceptably primitive level in quality.

Obviously, both these positions are unacceptable. There are six factors involved here: size, environmental acceptability; cost, quality, technology and employment potential. Environmental acceptability and quality are obviously a *sine qua non*. If the objective is to maximise employment and minimise the per unit size at more or less the same cost, the only imponderable that remains to be determined is technology. I see no alternative for populous developing countries except to develop these technologies of the future. One may perhaps call them the 'Laptop technologies', taking the analogy of the computers, wherein all the six factors listed above are integrated. I invite the technology experts here and everywhere to ponder over this particular aspect of our necessity and direct their research and innovation to this end, working in cooperation with us.

Coming back to the present situation, till recently, we laid emphasis on self-reliance and trade with traditional partners. This is changing now. In the calendar year 1993, proposals from APEC economies, excluding the US, constituted over 20 per cent of the total foreign investment collaborations approved by the Government of India. Between January 1991 and June 1994, a total of 1904 foreign collaborations were approved with APEC economies. During this period, direct investment from APEC in India amounted to approximately 54 per cent of the total foreign investment received. These figures are, indeed, revealing.



With Russian President, Mr Boris Yeltsin at the farewell ceremony in St. George Hall of Kremlin, Moscow, 1 July 1994



Being seen off by the Russian Prime Minister, Mr Viktor Chernomyrdin on his departure from Moscow, 2 July 1994



Briefing the Press (on board Air India Boeing) during his return from Russian visit, New Delhi, 2 July 1994



Conferring with the Prime Minister of Slovak Republic, Mr Jozef Moravcik, New Delhi, 7 July 1994



*With the Deputy Premier and Minister for Foreign Affairs of
China, Mr Qian Qichen, New Delhi, 18 July 1994*



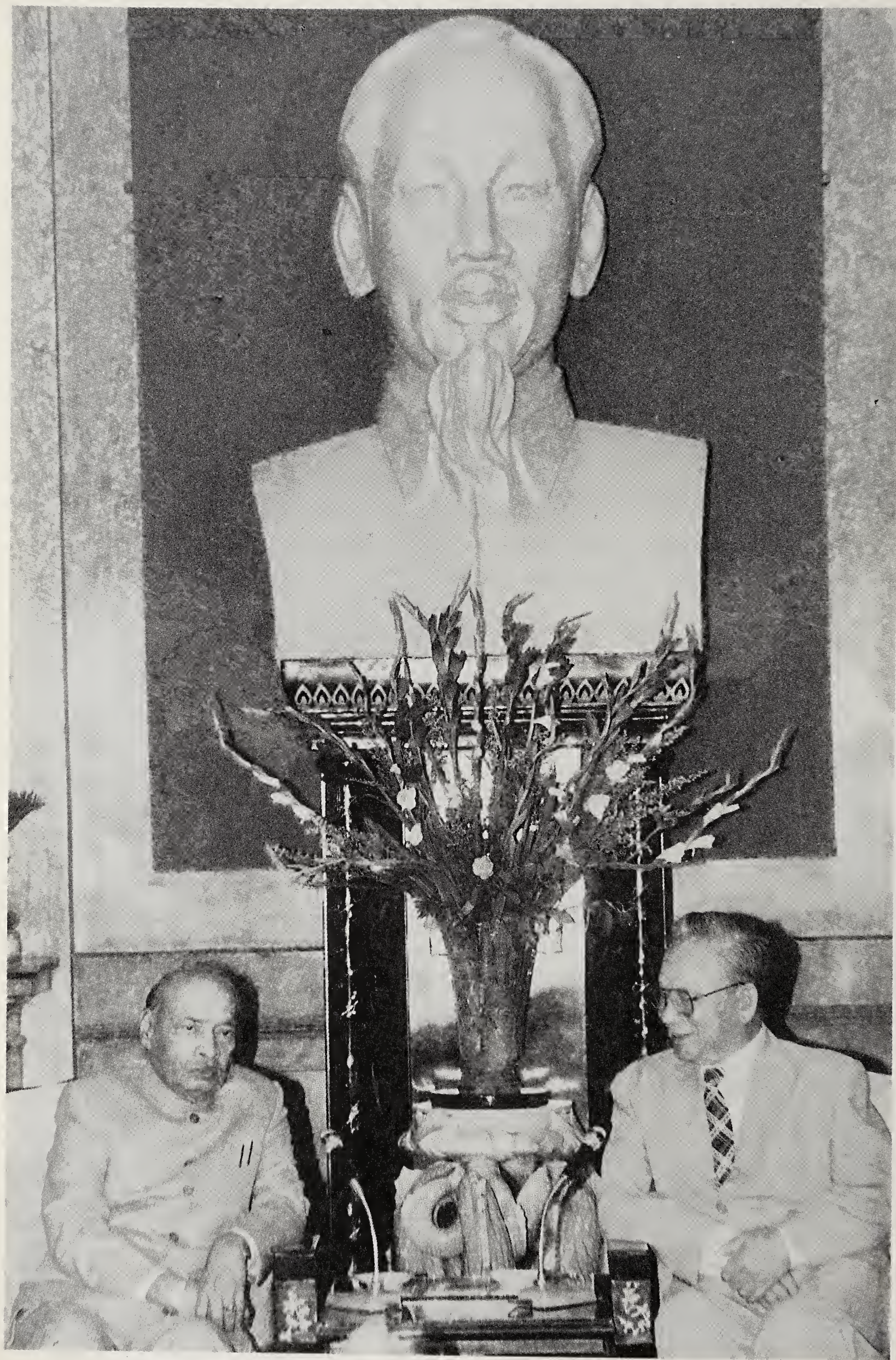
*With the President of Burkina Faso, Mr Blaise Compaore,
New Delhi, 23 July 1994*



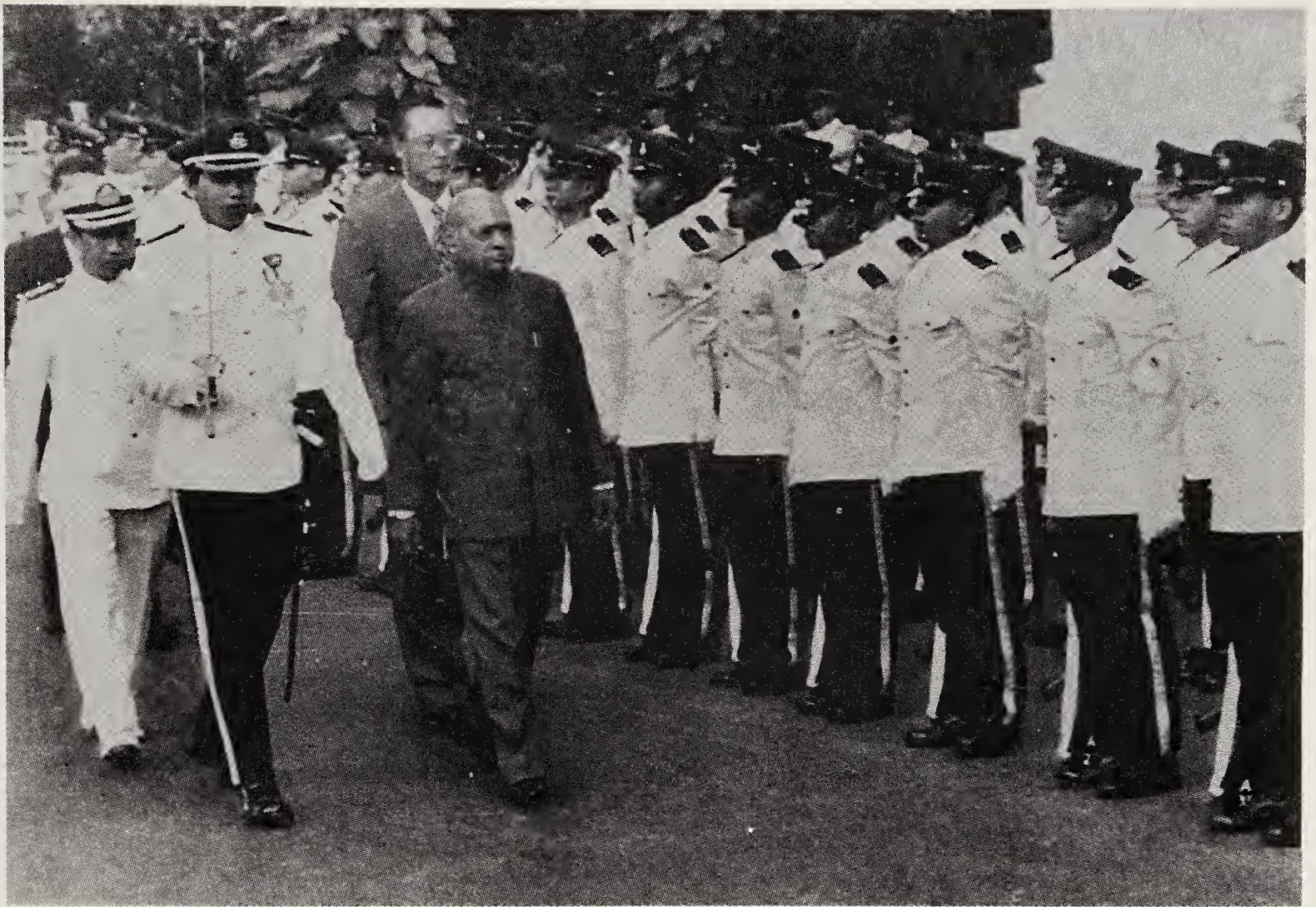
*With the Deputy Chancellor and Foreign Minister of Germany
Mr Klaus Kinkel, New Delhi, 28 July 1994*



*With the Vietnamese Prime Minister, Mr Vo Van Kiet,
Hanoi, 5 September 1994*



*With the President of Vietnam, Mr Le Duc Anh, Hanoi,
6 September 1994*



*Inspecting Guard of Honour with the Prime Minister,
Mr Goh Chok Tong during a ceremonial welcome at
Istana, Singapore, 8 September 1994*



*Delivering a lecture at the Institute of South-East Asian Studies,
Singapore, 8 September 1994*



*With the President of Singapore, Mr Ong Teng Cheong,
Singapore, 8 September 1994*



*Receiving the Speaker of House of Commons of
United Kingdom, Rt. Hon. Betty Boothroyd,
New Delhi, 20 September 1994*



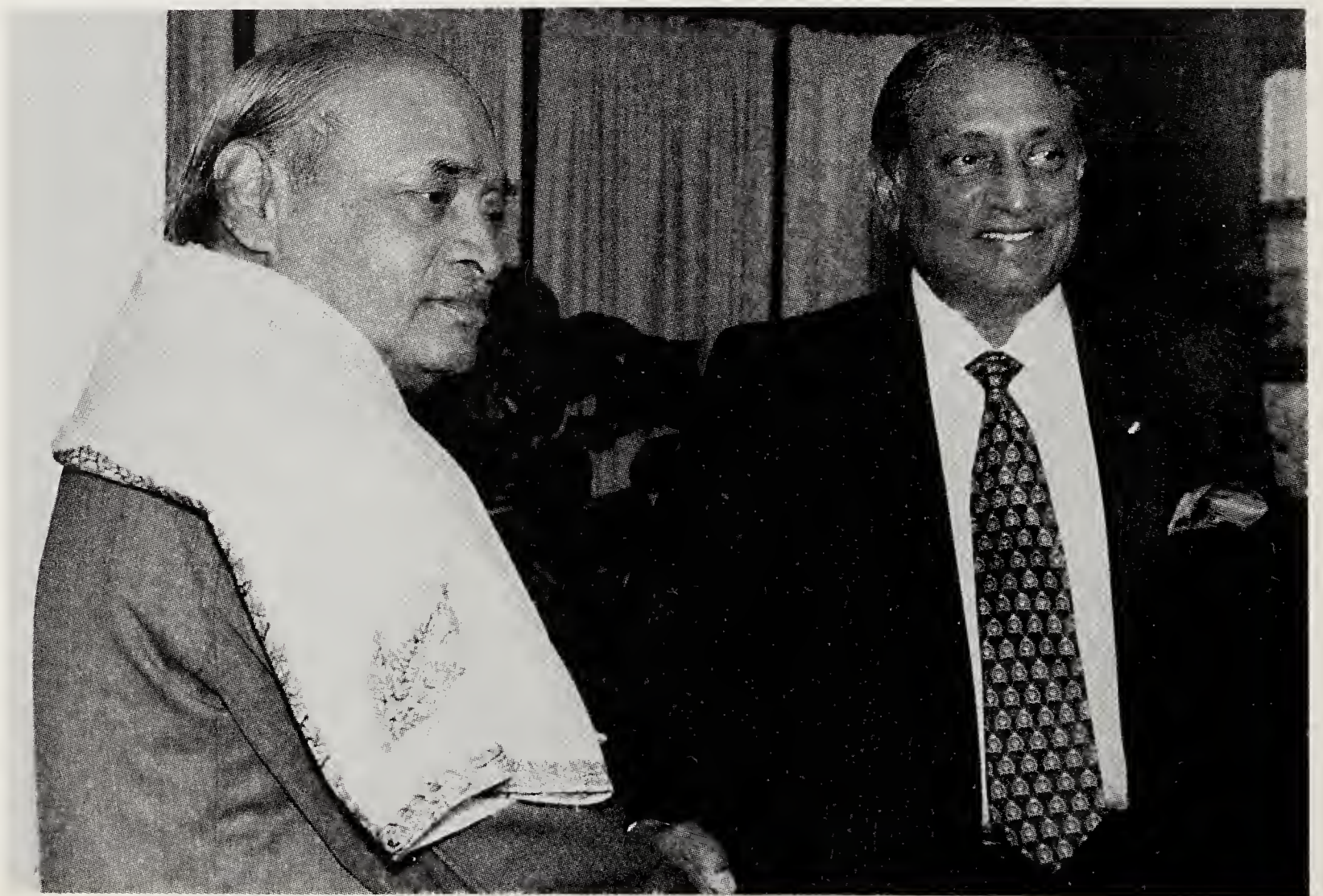
*With a delegation of International Congress of Biochemistry
and Molecular Biology, New Delhi,
22 September 1994*



*With the President of Republic of Togo, Mr Gnassingbe
Eyadema, New Delhi, 28 September 1994*



*In conversation with the Commonwealth Secretary General,
Mr Emeka Anyaoku, New Delhi, 5 December 1994*



*With the Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka, Mr Lakshman Kadirgamar,
New Delhi, 7 December 1994*



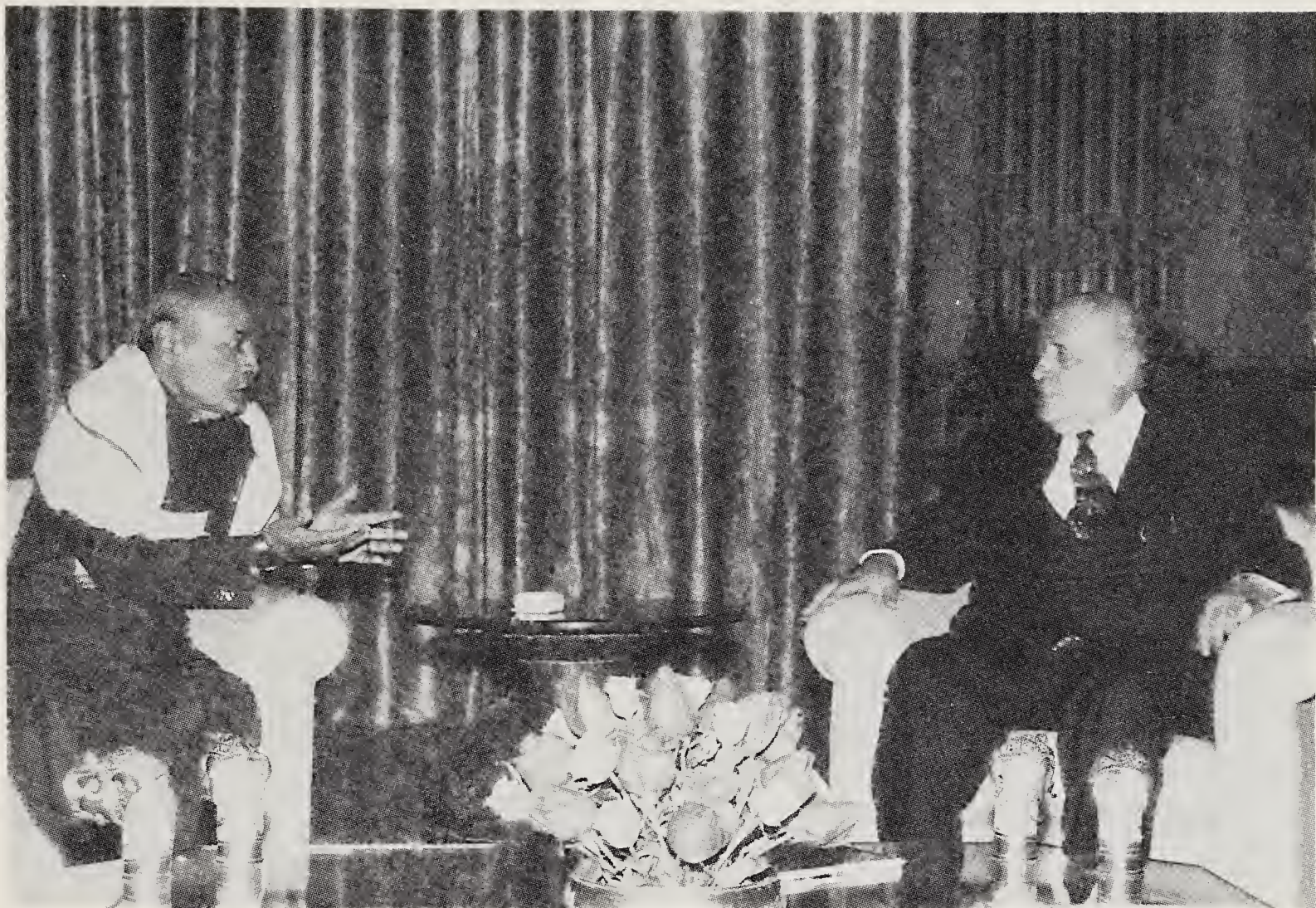
With King Birendra of Nepal, New Delhi, 13 December 1994



*With the Japanese Minister for Trade and Industries,
New Delhi, 7 January 1995*



*With the Secretary of State for Foreign & Commonwealth
Affairs of UK, Mr Douglas Hurd, New Delhi,
7 January 1995*



*Conferring with the President of the Republic of Turkey,
Mr Suleyman Demirel, New Delhi, 31 January 1995*



*Calling on the President of Italy, Mr Oscar Luigi Scalfaro,
New Delhi, 10 February 1995*



*With the Chinese Premier, Mr Li Peng, Copenhagen,
Denmark, 10 March 1995*



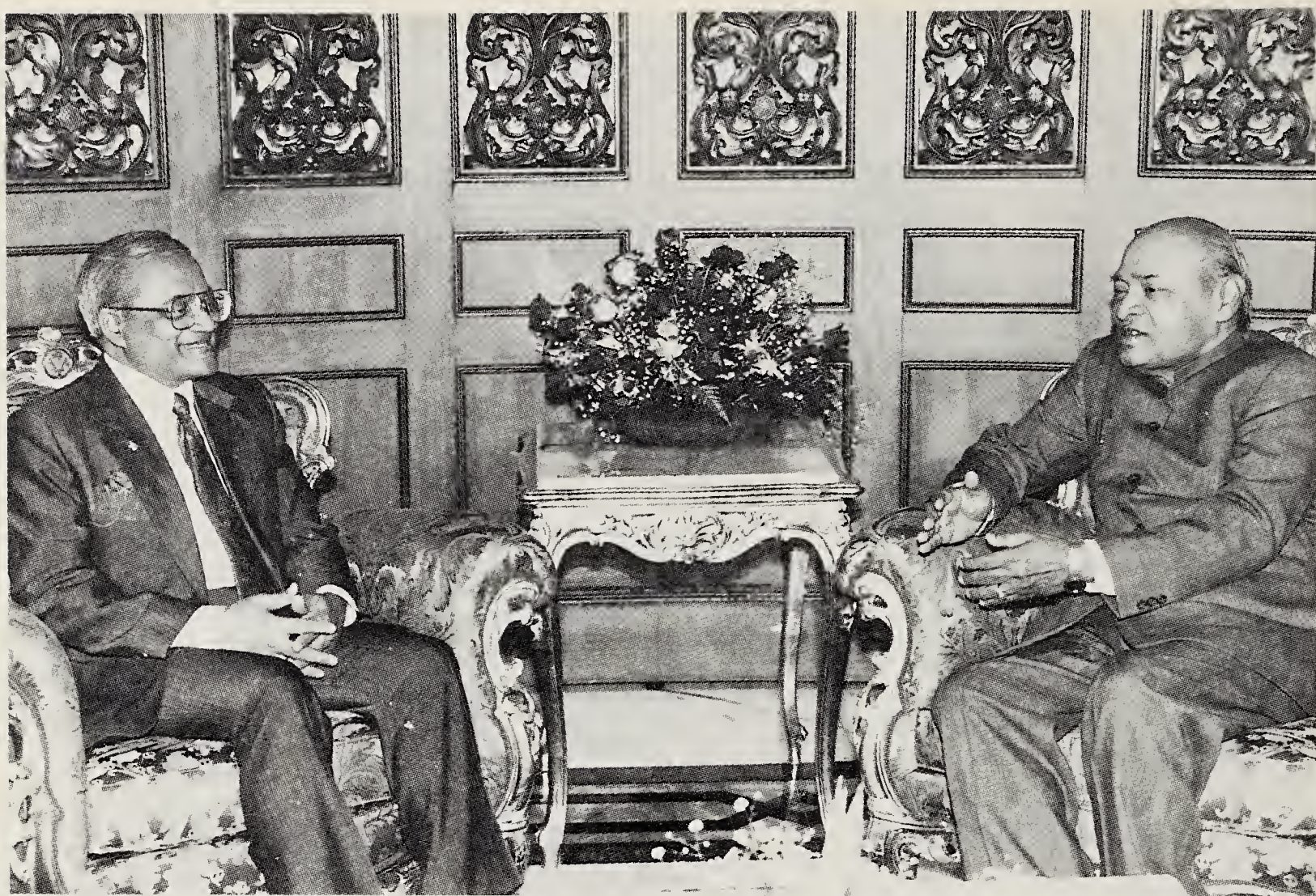
*With the Secretary General of the UNO, Mr Boutros Boutros
Ghali, Copenhagen, Denmark, 10 March 1995*



*Addressing the World Summit for Social Development,
Copenhagen, 11 March 1995*



*With the US first lady, Mrs Hillary Clinton, New Delhi,
29 March 1995*



With the President of Republic of Maldives, Mr Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, Male, Maldives, 15 April 1995



With the Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan, Mr Boris Shikhmuraon, New Delhi, 19 April 1995

On the other hand, Indian businessmen have established joint ventures all over the Asia-Pacific—148 in the APEC economies. The overseas Indian community, which retains strong links with its homeland, but prefers to live and work abroad, constitutes a vital link between India and the countries of the Asia-Pacific. We have a stake in their prosperity, as they have a stake in our future.

From April 1993 to March 1994, APEC economies accounted for 45 per cent of India's exports and 30 per cent of India's imports. But all this trade amounted to only about 1 per cent of intra-APEC trade. We are acutely aware of the considerable potential that exists, considering India's natural resources, its growing infrastructure, human resources, a well developed legal system and an increasingly open financial and investment regime.

Last year we commenced an economic dialogue with ASEAN. My visit to Singapore, and earlier visits to other ASEAN countries, have convinced me that the potential for India's partnership with this nucleus organisation in the Asia-Pacific is immeasurable.

Already we find Indian enterprises prospecting oil, constructing rail roads, building power plants, setting up enterprises to manufacture engineering goods, process agricultural products and trade all over the region. At the moment, however, all this is on a miniscule scale. Much more is possible and desirable. India, therefore, wants a real and sizeable jump.

India's premier railway construction enterprise has rehabilitated, electrified and built several hundred kilometres of railway track in Malaysia. I found it significant when last month a leading Malaysian company presented me with a proposal to construct a 10,000 kilometre toll highway on 'build-operate-transfer' basis, linking India's major cities. Yet another Indian company Bharat Heavy Electrical Limited has set up thousands of megawatts of generation capacity in the Asia-Pacific region, in those very countries from

where we are now receiving offer to set up power plants in India. Is it a paradox that Indian companies are exerting themselves abroad to execute projects of a nature, which firms from those countries are attempting to set up in India? Far from being a paradox, I think this is the essence of eclectic enterprise; business that constantly seeks to move beyond its boundaries. This has been the key to success in the Asia-Pacific and a valuable lesson we have learned from you. The creation of wealth in this region, particularly in those countries which were eclipsed for two to three centuries by colonial rule, is an example to mankind everywhere. It has also aroused sufficient interest in the developed members of the APEC for them to have realised that a partnership with Asia is not only desirable but inevitable. Speaking for a developing country, I feel we must not barter our advantage without ensuring that we can become equal partners with equal say in the eventual codification of international laws and regulations that will govern international political, economic and social activity in the next century.

What we see in the Asia-Pacific region cannot be called a clash of civilizations but a mesh interwoven with religious, ethnic, racial, linguistic and professional strands. And it is this diversity which gives the resilience that enables this mesh to sustain the almost unbelievable growth rates that Asia has seen in the past decade and will continue to see well into the next century.

I am consciously including India in this reality and this vision of the Asia-Pacific that I propound. If a new relationship is to be forged, it is only the visible superstructure that needs to be erected over the very sound and solid foundation that already exists.

This superstructure will include increasing levels of interaction through travel and communication links. Rural Indian homes today receive TV programmes in Indian languages beamed from Hong Kong and Moscow. We expect that in the not-too-distant future, programmes made in India will be beamed over the Asia-Pacific.

We in India are conscious of the dangers posed by commercial media networks whose indiscriminate satellite footprints stamp over our cultural sensitivities and disrupt our social ethos. But we have full faith in our cultural heritage and believe that it will survive all onslaughts from outside, integrating healthy influences and also influencing the external factors in the process. The information revolution should have, as its natural corollary, an enlightened understanding of our cultural affinities and differences. The more we know of each other, the better we understand each other. Geographical, linguistic and legal barriers must come down. I realise, India has a big responsibility in this regard and I assure you that we will not shirk this responsibility. We will vindicate the cardinal principle of responsible media projection, namely that profit must be predicted on propriety.

India has already taken steps to liberalise its currency regime, open the economy to more imports and investment, and educate its people on the benefits of exposure to the outside world. The Asia-Pacific could be the springboard for our leap into the global marketplace.

Much has been reported recently, as you pointed out Mr Chairman very interestingly just now, including in the Singapore Press, about the slowing down of India's economic reforms. May I clarify that if we appear to have slowed down, it may only be because the pace of reforms over the past three years has been extremely rapid. Only last month my Government has further liberalised the currency regime to make the rupee convertible on current account. Meanwhile the Bombay Stock Exchange continues its bull run. Regarding our Labour Policy, one has to understand the Indian situation and spare a thought for the hundreds of millions of people who face the prospect of unemployment. A hire and fire policy in India would not only be inhumane, it would be economically unwise—this can be proved, this can be demonstrated. At the same time, businessmen who are planning future investments have the

least to worry about, because unlike established businesses whose work force may have overgrown for various reasons not germane to results, new business can always assess its manpower requirements accurately so as to avoid the risk of becoming uneconomic on that score.

I can assure this gathering that India not only welcomes, but is worth, your time and money. Investment in India is an investment in the future—a future not only for the investor but for a population of one billion which will remain a force for stability in the world. In return, countries of the Asia-Pacific will find in India a reliable partner, a vast market, the process of whose development will simultaneously involve the renaissance of a great and noble civilization which we all share in some measure.

Before I conclude, I would like to revert to my earlier quotation, what our great poet Rabindranath Tagore said about the new dawn coming from the horizon of the East, where the sun rises. Those were the days of the Second World War, of the horror that made no sense to anyone. The War ended, only to give rise to the cold war. That too has ended, only to leave the world in a flux of a different kind. The world has no big war now, hot or cold; yet it has no peace either. Thus, the transition to the post-cold war world, welcome as it is, is likely to be equally difficult, if not more. The days of celebrating the demise of a system are over. The contours of a different world have begun to emerge, a world so different from the world of blocs and deterrents that we had hardly expected it even to exist. But cold war attitudes persist—not because there is anything permanently valid or inevitable about them, but because their removal takes time and even more than time, the genuine realisation that the change in human destiny needs a corresponding change in man's own mindset. I firmly believe that beyond the processes of diplomacy and inter-state relations that occupy our attention most of the time, there is an immeasurably vast area in which all the tiny specks that make up humanity are surprisingly equal. We have to

capture the spirit and quality of that equality and realise the unity of Man. This is the challenge of the unipolarity which we witness today. This challenge is an opportunity which history does not often throw up. We miss it at our own peril. And we can capture it, through the essentially Asian ethos of compassion, harmony and a sense of sharing, where the individual and the collective entities are beautifully blended to make life a consistent whole.

I am happy to have had this opportunity to enunciate my belief in this vision of a new relationship between India and the Asia-Pacific from Singapore, which I consider the geographic and symbolic centre of the Asia-Pacific. I trust this vision will be realised in the near future and that the next century will be a century of partnership for us all.

Indo-Singapore Friendship and Cooperation

IT IS AN immense pleasure for me to be in Singapore today. I am most grateful to you, Prime Minister, for the warmth with which my delegation and I have been received in your beautiful country. I am also very touched by your thoughtful remarks. Our bilateral relations, Mr Prime Minister, are deeply rooted in the history. We have had centuries-old cultural ties with Singapore and this region—cultural, religious, linguistic, artistic, they all have harmoniously merged with the local scene. The Indian art exhibition, ‘*Alankara*’ in Singapore’s National Museum for which Mr Prime Minister, you personally have been a source of inspiration, reaffirms the solid moorings of our multifaceted relationship. We had the privilege of hosting you, Mr Prime Minister, as the Chief Guest at

our Republic Day celebrations in January this year. Your visit was the beginning of a new chapter of close relations between the two countries. This return visit of mine to Singapore within a short span of eight months will, I am confident, provide further impetus to this ongoing endeavour. My visit is a manifestation of our keen desire to concretise in a specific manner our wide ranging relations with Singapore. With the active interest of our two Governments to create synergetic linkages between our two economies, more and more Indian and Singapore corporate bodies are now doing business with each other. Two way trade is showing a healthy upward trend. We note with some satisfaction that Singapore has emerged as our eleventh largest trading partner and that today we have thirty-five Indian joint ventures in Singapore against fourteen three years back. Some of our States have sent delegations to Singapore to tie up various collaboration agreements. I appreciate your personal interest in meeting with them. It has been a great encouragement to them. Our aim is to move ahead at a pace that fully reflects the strength of our commitment and the abundance of our potential. Towards this purpose, India and Singapore can achieve a partnership that draws upon the strengths of each for the benefit of both.

Mr Prime Minister, Singapore today stands as a model of growth for developing countries. It is an island of peace and prosperity under wise and dynamic leadership. It has matured into a self-confident nation, as an economic nerve centre of Asia and providing linkages with international commerce. We have seen for ourselves the tremendous growth of its infrastructure and the efficient running of its complex system. It is remarkable that such development has taken place within a frame work of environmental awareness and conservation. This is much that Singapore has to offer to the world, not only in terms of technology, and infrastructural development but also in terms of individual commitment and disciplined national endeavour. In this part of the world, we are conscious of the impressive progress towards regional cooperation being developed and explored. We noted with great interest the

recent deliberations of the 27th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting and the first meeting of the newly constituted ASEAN Regional Forum. ASEAN countries have taken a timely decision to go beyond deliberations of economic cooperation to assuage affecting peace and security in the region.

We believe that the scope for enlarged cooperation between Indian and regional organisations in South-East Asia is greater than ever. We will do all we can to further expand and deepen our relations with the region as a whole and we are confident that Singapore will support in this regard. With our shared political outlook and the complementarities in our economies, I am confident that our partnership in the regional context as well, will flourish.

India and the United Nations

FORTY-NINE YEARS AGO on this day our country, then not yet fully independent, took its first big step in foreign policy to join the United Nations as one of its founder members. This year we celebrate the 50th anniversary of this international organisation. Through turbulent times and difficult years the United Nations has been a major factor in maintaining peace and in changing the world slowly and often perceptibly into a visibly different place. India became independent within two years of the setting up of the United Nations. The two grew together giving strength and inspiration to each other

in a symbiotic relationship. Each was the product of a long struggle; one of the violent world war and the other of the sacrifices of the non-violent freedom movements. UN was founded on the age old dream of one world envisioned for centuries by enlightened human beings.

Our Foreign Policy has been deeply influenced by the universal outlook of the stalwarts who led us to freedom. India and the United Nations worked in tandem, their policies being in complete harmony and their goals common. India championed the decolonisation, opposed racialism, woke up for the sovereignty and equality of the newly independent countries and articulated the aspirations of their people for economic development. India stood for peace and disarmament. It stood for democracy and human rights. In the United Nations India stood tall, independent and non-aligned. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru explained this relationship very effectively in his speech to the Constituent Assembly in January 1947. He said, "The only possible real objective that we have in common with other nations, can have is the objective of cooperating and building up some kind of world structure, call it one world, call it what you like. The beginning of this world structure have been laid in the United Nations Organisation. It is still feeble, it has many defects nevertheless it is the beginning of the world's structure and India has split herself to cooperate in its work." This solemn pledge we have honoured with full dedication in word and in deed.

India has been an active participant in UN peace keeping operations whether in the Korean peninsula, Indo-China or Africa. It provided the largest contingent of peace keepers in UN operation in Congo in the early 1960's and have been actively involved since then in Asia, Africa, Europe and Latin America. This participation which we are uniquely qualified as a peace loving nation has contributed to international stability and security. Eradication of poverty, providing employment and creating a just, fair and eq-

uitable international economic order are prime concerns of the international community. The UN is rightly devoting itself increasingly to addressing these issues. These developmental activities need to be strengthened. Discussions on agenda for development and the forthcoming international meetings on social development and women are welcome steps in this direction. Peace and security to be durable require levels of human comparable prosperity across the globe.

The United Nations cannot function usefully or effectively as long as humanity continues to be burdened with increasing economic and social disparities. The resources of our planet are exploited rapaciously. We will face not only environmental degradation but also ecological disaster. India has been playing an active role in the international negotiation for global cooperation, to prevent environment degradation and promote sustainable growth. Our commitment to world peace and the progress of all human beings remain deep and abiding. Our endeavour to promote this whole through the United Nations will always be sincere and purposeful. On this auspicious day India rededicates herself to the cause of the United Nations Organisation as the only vehicle for steering human kind to a better future.

Honouring a Champion of Freedom

I AM VERY happy to be present at this ceremony, honouring Archbishop Trevor Huddleston. Mr Huddleston is well known in India where he has many friends and admirers. His life-long crusade against apartheid and injustice in South Africa of the past is recorded in inspiring terms in the pages of history. I am particularly happy that the award presentation to Archbishop Huddleston is graced by the presence of his friend, President Nelson Mandela, who symbolises the new resurgent South Africa.

Archbishop Huddleston began his struggle against apartheid and racial discrimination from small town alongwith his friends and colleagues. He awakened and moulded world public opinion against the injustices of racial prejudice and institutionalised racial tyranny. His tireless efforts contributed in incalculable measure to the efforts of the vast majority of South Africans and to global efforts to rid South Africa of apartheid. Today's multiracial South Africa thus becomes a triumphant testimony to his moral courage and determination.

India can, I think with all justification, derives special satisfaction from the contributions of the people like the Archbishop to the world's continuing battles against oppression and injustice. South Africa was the crucible in which Mahatma Gandhi crystallised his epoch making social, economic and political strategies that he used to such telling effect in India later on. The Mahatma's legacy has become our *mantra*. India stands for freedom and justice everywhere and will work with all those who strive to preserve and strengthen those values.

I consider myself fortunate to have served in the capacity of India's Foreign Minister on Commonwealth Committee of

Foreign Ministers on Sanctions against the then South African Government in the late 80's. It is during those years that I could understand the true nature and oppressive and inhumane dimensions of apartheid as also the disinformation that the then Government was capable of spreading everywhere. They almost made it appear that apartheid was a great boon for blacks themselves. This was a refrain which was very evident from the lot of literature that came into our hands, particularly while we were investigating into all the aspects of apartheid in this committee. It was our late Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi who had deputed me to serve on that Committee whose report was prepared after a good deal of hard work not without some real anxious moments in the process of arriving at a consensus. I have reason to believe that the report submitted to the Commonwealth Summit at Kuala Lumpur in October 1989 had a positive effect in the final stages of the people's agitation in South Africa.

It is befitting that Archbishop Huddleston receive an award named after Smt Indira Gandhi, an unflinching supporter of a free and just dispensation for South Africa. Her commitment reflected in India's staunch advocacy of majority rule in South Africa and of the need for the international community to unite in achieving this objective.

Today, the India-South Africa relations can look to a future based on mutual goodwill and understanding motivated by hope, enthusiasm and enriched by mutual benefit. It is, therefore, singularly apposite that all these elements come together today as we honour one champion of freedom and justice, Archbishop Huddleston in the name of a second champion, namely Indira Gandhi and in the inspiring presence of a third champion, Dr Nelson Mandela.

International Cooperation for Social Development

IT IS AN honour and privilege to be present at this historic gathering of world leaders to consider a subject of unparalleled importance to humankind, namely, social development. It is of special importance to be in Denmark, a country which has been a path-finder in conceptualising and articulating progressive thoughts and programmes crucial to genuine social development. I would like to express my gratitude to the people and Government of Denmark for their warm hospitality. May I also convey India's warm appreciation and gratitude to the Secretary General of the United Nations and to his colleagues, especially Ambassador Juan Somavia of Chile, who have worked so hard and so purposefully to organise this unique Summit ?

Today, the world stands at the crossroads of history even as it struggles to free itself from the attitudes of the cold war era. We are at the crossroads because we know that certain paradigms of development which placed the state alone at the centre did not succeed. There is now a swing to the other side, namely the tendency to put an untrammelled market alone at the centre. While the new enthusiasm sweeps over the countries, one cannot help the uneasy feeling that what is needed really is a certain market plus : otherwise, the poor and the weak are likely to suffer exclusion due to the imperfections of the market. The inadequacy in both these approaches stems from the failure to place the people at the centre. This centrality of the people is extremely important. We have to empower the people themselves as the central strategy to social and economic development to sustain human progress. That, in my view, is the vision we should adopt today. I am glad that the

Draft Declaration and Programme of Action to emerge at this Summit recognise this basic need. The main import is the empowerment of every disadvantaged class and group, in fact, every single disadvantaged person. This is possible only if certain rights fundamental to human development are guaranteed to people, such as the rights to food, work, shelter, education, health and information through national determination and international cooperation.

International cooperation is very important for more reasons than one. In the first place, all countries the world over are in need of social development and integration. The dominant causes for discord may be different in different countries, but no society today can claim to be fully developed and integrated. And the whole of humankind is what we are talking about at this Summit, as I understand it. Besides, the emergence of the so-called 'cultural fault-lines', even if it is not accepted as the solitary problem facing the world, is increasingly a menacing phenomenon and is truly worldwide. It can and does lead to terrorism, not unoften exported from neighbouring quarters and spell disruption of peace and development.

The core issues of poverty eradication and social integration cannot be addressed credibly without adequate resources, non-discriminatory access to markets and the availability of technologies that are relevant to these core issues. At the national level, countries have to commit the resources required to realise the rights for the poor in terms of institution building, formulation of policies, designing of strategies and above all, mechanisms of monitoring and evaluation that make implementation sustainable. The rights I have just mentioned are fundamental to development in its broadest sense. They act as a corrective to the distortions of the state and the market severally and also complement the efforts and achievements of both. It is this harmony that we would seek to develop in the context of the reforms that we have embarked upon presently in our own country, as a means to our goal of eradication of poverty.

Our leader Mahatma Gandhi mobilised the masses of our people in our struggle for freedom. He inspired an impoverished nation to win freedom from the world's mightiest empire by non-violent means. As India struggles towards its second freedom—from want, disease and ignorance, we go back to Mahatma Gandhi and his technique of social mobilisation of the people. Our strategy goes well beyond representative governance and endeavours to bring in more and more people's participation at the grass roots level. To this end, in the last couple of years, we amended our Constitution to provide for decentralised, participative, village level democratic institutions with statutory representation to the socially disadvantaged groups of our people, with a third of all elective representative posts reserved and earmarked for women. It is our resolve to make the concerns of gender and the rights of the child, the adolescents and the youth the centre of all our decision-making, including economic decision-making. This is the mutually reinforcing social and economic vision that would inform our development strategies during the rest of this decade and into the next century, side by side with a massive effort to achieve maximum industrialisation and growth in order to make India a modern competitive and technologically front-rank nation. We do not underestimate the very real and practical difficulties involved in bringing about this combination. Yet, we have no alternative, nor a better combination to address our massive problems. For the past three-and-a-half years, we have embarked on a truly revolutionary reform of our economic and industrial policy. The process is irreversible, with a national consensus backing it. At the same time, those sections of the people who cannot, in the very nature of things reap the benefits of the policy reform directly and in the short run, would certainly need a helpful, caring and enabling dispensation so as to attain the levels of eligibility and capacity to find entry into the new system on equal terms. This would mean a massive and well-coordinated programme, backed with commensurate resources and other efforts, to lift the huge base of the pyramid to those levels within a reasonable time frame. The magnitude and

complexity of the task in the Indian context, as well as that of many developing countries, can easily be imagined, particularly when it is seen as integral with the reforms process, which it really is.

When reforms are undertaken, what really happens is deeper than the mere economic impact of the reforms. The fact is that in poor societies, there is a low-level equilibrium which prevents internal tensions and creates an interdependence of sorts, even in that environment of overall poverty. I am sure those who belong to developing societies are aware of this situation. It is only when economic development brings in prosperity, along with certain disparities, that the equilibrium tends to get disturbed. When those disparities go beyond the point of toleration, we run into conflicts and strife. Obviously, since we have to end poverty through these very reforms which we have chosen after due deliberation; it follows that the paradigm of our development must necessarily contain an effective component of social justice and harmony, in order to succeed in the long or even the short run. I may venture to add here that this need for a modified paradigm applies to developed countries as well.

This is the age of information. Legitimately, the engines of global information should not be confined to a mere exchange or transfer of information relating to money and business, as is generally the case today. Going far beyond this scope, information must become the instrument of knowledge and wisdom that promote the spiritual oneness of humankind. That is what social integration is about and should be at all levels. However, social integration is not cultural domination or homogenisation. This is where certain effects of globalisation, notwithstanding its obvious merits should be stoutly resisted especially by the societies of the developing world, drawing upon their own civilizational strengths. There is no dearth of these in our societies. This is, indeed, important in the context of material lifestyles and consumption levels, whether in the rich countries or in the rich islands within the poor countries.

A commitment to self-discipline and restraint in consumption should emerge from this Summit as the first step of cultural and spiritual solidarity in our effort at poverty eradication and social integration. This sentiment has been expressed often in the past, but it has hardly happened anywhere in the world. There is nothing surprising in this, since the attention of the whole world was occupied by wars, hot and cold, in almost the entire twentieth century. It is only now at the fag end of the century that the leaders of the world have begun to think of how to live, rather than how to kill, or escape killing. The new task is truly new and stupendous. Copenhagen is only a beginning, and if what men could do for destruction is any indication, what they can also do for a changed agenda of construction does hold immense hope for humankind. After all, it is the technology of living, that is waiting to be developed for universal adoption in the twenty-first century.

What is being referred to as a 'Good Society', wherein values are not lopsided or unduly weighed on the basis of a single factor such as wealth or military strength, needs to emerge in the world. This cannot happen by itself. In my view, it will need a constant effort on the part of leaders of societies, not necessarily confined to leaders of governments. A beginning had to be made somewhere, even in a small way, and I hope that this Summit will initiate serious thinking on this very important aspect of life on this planet. The presence of a large number of non-governmental organisations at this Summit is a welcome feature that will help focus attention on the people themselves, rather than their relation with their governments. Even if final answers are not forthcoming at this Summit, and old attitudes peep through the deliberations, there is no need to be daunted. After all, considering the time taken in perfecting the processes of destruction, I am sure the construction of a new society, which is what our new task amounts to, will take less time and much less strain. It would also contribute to the integrity of our environment, which is at peril today. And that is another story that compels our attention.

Our vision for the Summit should go beyond the Summit itself, so as to translate the vision into action. Commitments must be backed by the will to act. As for India, we intend to set up a suitable and effective mechanism for social development at the national level. This will be as a first step in the action to achieve tangible results within a time-frame, in all the three core areas addressed by this Summit.

We know that poverty and peace are interlinked. Poverty and distress anywhere in the world have the potential to threaten world security. Equity and unity within and among nations are, therefore, a moral as well as practical imperative. Nowhere would the interdependence of nations be put to greater test in the years to come than in the area of poverty eradication and social integration. We, therefore, need goodwill and cooperation from all sides. I have no doubt that the current generation of world leaders would be found equal to this task as we rise to meet the challenges of the remaining half decade of this century and into the next.

Strengthening Indo-Maldives Friendship and Cooperation

IT IS A special pleasure for me to be with you this afternoon for the inauguration of the Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital here. The Hospital is at once a tribute to the memory of a remarkable leader, Smt Indira Gandhi, and a symbol of India-Maldives friendship and cooperation. In inaugurating it, President Gayoom and I reaffirm our commitment to the time-honoured values that bind our countries together.

Speech at the inauguration of Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital, Male, 15 April 1995

The Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital embodies the dream that our former Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi had in regard to the further strengthening of India-Maldives friendship and cooperation. It was he who, along with President Gayoom, first conceived and initiated this project. In naming it after Smt Indira Gandhi, who dedicated her years of public service to the welfare of the people, we are meeting our pledge to cooperate for the benefit of our peoples. Both India and the Maldives are developing countries where affordable health care is a priority need. I trust that in going some distance in meeting this need in the Maldives, the Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital will stand as a shining symbol of what friendship between two countries can achieve.

I am glad to see that the hospital has developed fully in accordance with the vision that our leaders had for it. It represents a significant addition to the public health care facilities in these Islands and can help towards greater self-sufficiency and upgrading of locally available skills. As we have learnt from experience, the control of disease and the promotion of public health need an eclectic approach as well as close coordination among various disciplines in order to give maximum benefit. They also need the cooperation of every village, family and citizen, who in turn should be aware of the minimum needs of society to enable it to progress. The patterns of public health and health administration in other countries, especially in the developed countries, are sometimes not entirely appropriate for our countries. Our needs are different and our attitudes are different. We, therefore, have to identify our problems and find our own solutions. This Hospital, in trying to do this, can provide invaluable service to the people of the Maldives.

For developing countries like India and the Maldives, public health is one of their principal priority areas calling for urgent and effective attention. Besides public health, we have to work to provide shelter, education and employment—in a word, enable our people to lead a life of a productive endeavour, of dignity, and of

contentment. In an era of vast change—political, economic, scientific, technological, cultural and other—countries like ours face both challenges and opportunities in our nation-building tasks. I am confident that our two countries will be able to meet these challenges and utilise these opportunities to the maximum.

I extend my warm congratulations to all those who contributed their time and effort to making this Hospital project a success. Services of the kind this hospital provides must begin where people are and where problems arise. It is with this belief that we have extended our hand in friendship to the Government and the people of the Maldives in working with them to meet one of their developmental priorities, namely, public health. In wishing the Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital many years of valuable service to the people of the Maldives, I take great pleasure in joining President Gayoom in inaugurating it. I would also like to ensure while the Hospital is being developed, whatever needs are felt, I will see that all these needs are met in its formative years. Once again, I thank you for this opportunity that you have given me of being a part of this exemplary achievement in bilateral friendship and cooperation.

Indo-Iran Bilateral Relations

IT IS A great pleasure to join in the welcome accorded to you, Mr President, by this august gathering of Parliamentarians. We know you as a scholar-statesman and a distinguished leader of a great and friendly neighbouring country. Iran has been one of the crucibles of human civilization, moulding tradition and custom and influencing the history of humankind. It is against this backdrop that we

welcome you in the belief that your historic visit to India will be a landmark in our bilateral relation.

During your stay, you will have an opportunity of renewing your acquaintance with life and culture of the people of India which displays unmistakable evidence of ancient contacts with Iran. The people of India value their traditional political, cultural and commercial ties with your country and its people. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru aptly described our ties in his book, *The Discovery of India*, "Iranians and Indians,....., according to a Persian legend, had got separated from each other, one going to the East and the other to the West. Their families had forgotten all about each other and the only thing that remained in common between them were the snatches of a few old tunes which they still played on their flutes. It was through these tunes that, after a lapse of centuries, the two families recognised each other and were reunited."

We live in a fast-changing world that is entering a new phase in history after the end of the cold war. Fresh opportunities are opening up even as we discern new threats to peace, and new hurdles to development. In order to preserve our political and economic independence and safeguard our security, we must work to promote universally accepted principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-aggression, and the peaceful resolution of disputes. Today we see ample evidence of heightened tension, instability, and conflict in areas where these important principles have been neglected or ignored. Staunchly independent countries like ours have a special role to play in ensuring that whatever world order comes into being is based on equity and justice.

There is also the urgent task of development. Being developing countries, this is an area of priority commitment for us. We are engaged in the endeavour to better the lot of our peoples, to give them a life of dignity and contentment, to accomplish self-generating

economic growth and self-reliance. It has not been an easy task, and in today's changed circumstances, we face new hurdles, whether it is in the form of conditionalities in trade or protectionist measures that deprive developing countries of their due share of the market. The voice of the developing world has been raised on such matters; it deserves to be heard and, what is more, it deserves a constructive response.

In our own country, as Your Excellency is no doubt aware, we are undertaking economic reforms designed to free the productive energies of our people. This process is carefully designed to judiciously tap the great potential in our economy. At the same time, Government's responsibilities towards the weaker sections of society are met by its enhanced commitment of resources to address their needs. Our rural development programme, for example, is a massive channelisation of energy and resources to eradicate poverty and provide our underprivileged citizens with intensified programmes in health, education and employment.

India's global perspective in favour of peace and development is underpinned by its commitment to regional harmony and cooperation. The countries of South Asia are inheritors of rich and ancient civilizations. In the contemporary world, they face similar challenges of economic growth and social progress. India is of the firm view that cooperation among South Asian countries would result in strengthening the forces of peace and stability in the region and also reinforce each country's nation-building efforts. In this context, India's participation in the activities and growth of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is a symbol of our dedication to regional friendship and cooperation. Such cooperation, we believe, can provide valuable inputs into the world's larger endeavour to overcome tensions and conflicts, and strengthen the forces of peace and security.

Looking beyond our region towards South-West Asia and the Gulf region, we in India see lands and peoples with whom our own

history has been interlinked for centuries. Instability and conflict in this region are interlinked for centuries. Instability and conflict in this region are, therefore, a matter of concern to us. We are confident nonetheless that the sagacity and determination of the people of this vibrant region, rich in talent, resources and experience, will emerge triumphant from the challenges that contemporary history places before them.

Excellency, we believe that your visit to India reflects the will in Iran for expansion and consolidation of India-Iran relations. From our side, you will find a ready response, for we share your desire to take our relations to a higher level of mutually beneficial interaction. Let us derive inspiration from our past and use it to expand as well as deepen India-Iran bilateral relations today and in the future.

Tolerance for a Better World Order

IT GIVES ME great pleasure to inaugurate this conference which has been organised as a part of the 'Year of Tolerance' observance by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), with particular reference to the distinctive civilizations of the Asia and Pacific region. I extend a special welcome to the participants from the fifteen countries of the aforementioned region, who are with us today. Their presence lends substantial significance to this meeting; as does the presence of numerous others, who are truly eminent in their respective fields of professional endeavour. Indeed, the sheer intellectual distinction and the rich social experience of the participants in this meeting will ensure that its deliberations

are of the highest quality and its prescriptions seminal in the lessons they hold out to us.

May I, at the very outset, say a word or two about the notion of tolerance which is so central to the deliberations of this conference. Like any other notion, rich and subtle in what it implies, the term tolerance has several resonances. At first blush, tolerance suggests an acceptance, more or less of religious and philosophical systems or secular world views and values different from those practised by an individual or a community. It also implies a disposition or willingness to endure within a permissible range of variation almost in a passive sense.

However, I would like to attach a positive value and an enriching capacity to tolerance as a social concept. To me, tolerance means the intensely creative interplay between different religious and philosophical systems, or between differing secular ideologies and world views within a society. Such creative interplay transforms the notion of tolerance from a passive to an active agency, through which an individual or the community enriches the material and spiritual life. Indeed, we have in tolerance the pre-history of the liberal notion of dissent, which regards new and challenging ideas as the possible basis of novel creativity and enrichment in society. Tolerance, as defined within liberal discourse, thus throws open endless vistas of moral and material improvement in the human condition. Perhaps the participants in this conference would like to dwell upon some of these issues, of immense significance to humanity, which stand out in bold relief once we regard tolerance as an essential constituent of a dynamic and vibrant society.

Indeed, if we cast our eyes over the concentrations of human settlement from the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, in West Asia, to the littoral of China, washed by the Pacific, then it becomes clear that all the great religions and metaphysical systems known to humanity, from Christianity, Judaism and Islam, through Hinduism

and Buddhism, to Confucianism and Taoism, were originally located in this segment of the planet Earth. Indeed, it also becomes clear that more often than not, more than one religious or metaphysical system thrived in this region under a single polity in the remote or the proximate past. This remarkable coexistence of different ethical and religious beliefs was also reflected in the so-called 'millat' system of the Ottoman Empire in the medieval centuries. According to this system, a polity which was formally Islamic extended full freedom to Christian, Jewish and other communities under its jurisdiction.

To us in India, the 'Year of Tolerance' decreed by UNESCO has a very special significance. The notion of tolerance, in the positive sense of creative interplay between different values and beliefs, which I emphasised earlier, is powerfully reflected in the history of the civilization of India. Our country has been dedicated to acquisition and dissemination of knowledge. India attracted traders and seekers of knowledge from diverse countries especially from Persia, West Asia, Greece, Rome and later from Central Asia, China, Mongolia, Tibet, Sri Lanka and South-East Asia.

The fusion of all this knowledge and amalgamation of the knowledge of East and West was combined by the Arabs with their own national genius which resulted in a flourishing of a rich Arab civilization. Travellers and scholars like Alberuni, Hiuen-Tsang and Fa-Hien visited India. Nalanda University in Bihar became a centre of international repute. The universities in India attracted students from a large number of countries which resulted in an impressive interaction of Indian knowledge with various civilizations. This fusion led poet Rabindranath Tagore to write :

*Come, O ye Aryans, Come, O ye non-Aryans,
Come, O Hindus, and Come, O Muslims;
And today, Come, O ye Englishmen,
and Come, O ye Christians;
Come, O ye Brahmins, purifying your hearts,
And hold the hands of all others.*

This intrinsic value of tolerance is reflected in our civilization in the famous saying in our ancient scripture of *Rig Veda* :

Ekam Sad, Vipra Bahudha Vadanti

(Truth is one, sages call it by various names.)

As is well known, this region of South Asia was first knit into a single polity in the third century B.C. by the Mauryan Emperor Ashoka. He replaced the *Yuddha Bheri*, the war drum with *Dharma Bheri*, the drum of religion and spirituality. In forging the diverse communities under his sway into a cohesive social body, Ashoka pursued a policy of active tolerance and social concern with a boldness rarely equalled in the annals of human history.

The Dharma Mahamatras were told to look after all sects including Nirgranthas or the Jains. He never sought to impose his beliefs on others. In the edicts which he inscribed on exquisitely crafted pillars and rocky outcrops, located at crossroads and in market-places throughout his vast Empire, the Mauryan ruler called upon his subjects to practise intellectual tolerance and love of their fellow men. The central theme of Ashoka's edict on toleration can even be read today saying:

Samanvaya Eva Sadhuh

(Concord or harmony is the right attitude in religion.)

The tradition of social and religious tolerance established during the Mauryan age constituted a powerful formative influence on the history of subsequent empires which were established in the region of South Asia. Indeed, it has been repeatedly observed by some of our more discerning historians that the notion of tolerance has been a distinctive and characteristic trait of our society over the centuries. This is so to an extent where even men and women of politics and secular concerns have quite often reached out to moral values as the real basis of their status and influence in society.

Perhaps the reason why men and women of prominence within Indian civilization have reached out to moral action as the true basis of their power is related to the fact that the common folk extended to spiritual achievement a regard and reverence rarely extended to those whose power rested upon brute authority and location in the formal hierarchies of society.

The deep roots of tolerance within Indian civilization, therefore, have been manifest in powerful secular figures located at the apex of society reaching out to the world of spirit in order to widen their intellectual horizons and to underpin their power and authority through moral action and deep social concern. While this phenomenon is a very important constituent of our cultural tradition, even more important than moral initiatives taken by those located at the apex, were the activities of popular saints and religious figures, who reached out to the common folk through literary compositions which combined simplicity of expression with spiritual compassion and metaphysical sophistication in finely balanced proportions. Such folk saints, who generated a powerful impulse of profound humanism and social tolerance through the medium of devotional theism can be legitimately regarded as the true founders of our cultural values and our collective psyche; and much more than men of political authority, they shaped the social and cultural contours of Indian society.

In our southern regions, we can look upon the Alwar saints of Tamil Nadu; or the folk poets of the Andhra or Kannada region; as the exemplars of this powerful undercurrent of grass roots spiritual democracy. Towards the north, the sacred city of Varanasi, in the heart of the Ganga valley, was the site for similar action at the popular level. Nobody represents this tradition in northern India better than the saintly Kabir, a weaver by profession, who addressed himself as much to the Hindus as he addressed himself to those who pursued the religion of Islam. He made one of the most earnest efforts to foster a spirit of harmony. As Kabir points out in one of his compositions:

*O servant, where dost thou seek me?
I am neither in temple nor in mosque ...
If thou art a true seeker,
Thou shalt at once see me;
Thou shalt meet me in a moment of time.*

Another great preacher of the time was Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism. He spent his whole life in preaching the gospel of universal toleration, based on what was good in Hinduism and Islam. His mission was to put an end to the conflict of religions. Like Kabir he preached the unity of Godhead and many of the hymns in Granth Sahib reflect this concept.

Swami Vivekananda who appeared towards the end of last century tried to awaken the humanistic impulse of the people. It is remarkable that Indian ethos spread in this region without a single act of violence. He said, "... ideas after ideas have marched out from her, but every word has been spoken with a blessing behind it and peace behind it."

The people of India are presently engaged in reflecting afresh upon the life and thought of the 'Father of the Nation', Mahatma Gandhi, as we celebrate his 125th birth anniversary. There are numerous ways in which the common folk of our country remember the Mahatma. But, above all, we look upon him as the greatest theorist and practitioner of non-violence and tolerance in the twentieth century. It would, therefore, be appropriate to locate the spirit of tolerance in Gandhiji's profound humanism. We can also focus upon the relevance of tolerance for the nuclear age—the age also of the global economic community—which threatens humanity with annihilation at the same time, as in its dialectical splendour, it opens up the prospect of a new era of hope and prosperity in the world.

How did Gandhiji practise tolerance? How was this notion drawn into the fabric of his humanistic vision? There is no simple

answer to such questions. But it would be legitimate to suggest that a variety of influences shaped the Mahatma's profound concern for those who differed from him in their understanding of the secularism and the spiritualism. In the first instance, Gandhiji subscribed to the Jain principle of *anekantavada* or the multifacetedness of truth. This metaphysical notion enabled the Mahatma to extend the most profound regard to truths other than his own without, in any way, compromising on his principles.

Next, Gandhiji believed that the grace of God reached out to humanity as a whole, so that he never questioned the integrity of his opponents. Nor did he regard those who opposed him, or differed from him, as less favoured by the Almighty than those who shared his values. Finally, the Mahatma attempted to reach out to the moral community of his opponents, at the same time as he sought to win them over to the authenticity of his vision. Gandhiji, in other words, sought engagement with those who differed from him or even regarded themselves as his opponents. Through such interaction with others, which did not preclude sharing their anxiety and pain, the Mahatma sought to build bonds of understanding between adversaries as a prelude to forgiveness and reconciliation.

Recalling his impression of the *New Testament* and comparing it with the *Gita*, Mahatma Gandhi stated that the Sermon on the Mount went straight to his heart. In his Autobiography he wrote that the verses, "But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man takes away thy coat let him have thy cloak too..." delighted me beyond measure. His principle of 'see no evil, speak no evil and hear no evil' essentially looks at the goodness of humanity.

The tradition of social tolerance and spiritual catholicity, which represents one of the basic constituents of Indian civilization is all pervasive. Mahatma Gandhi believed in the concept of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*. As in earlier centuries, the true basis of

Gandhiji's power and the regard which he enjoyed among the common folk lay in the remarkable fashion in which he married secular with spiritual concerns in his person. Through such means, Gandhiji was able to fashion a profoundly original notion of secularism in a country which enjoys a degree of religious plurality unknown to any other polity in our times. Such secularism was based upon an equality of status for different moral and religious systems in the belief that such systems constituted different paths to the same transcendent truth. Indeed, Gandhiji believed in the essential religiosity of life in all its many splendoured diversity, at the same time as he rejected the outward forms of religion and ritual, and more often than not the basis of unholy alliance of power and domination in society.

The world view of Mahatma Gandhi, with its focus upon tolerance and non-violence, has been the single most powerful influence in the framing of an agenda of social and economic transformation taken up in India after 1947. This world view was creatively applied in formulating the policies of Panchsheel which lay down the foundations of peaceful coexistence in nation building and social development, the policies taken up by Jawaharlal Nehru combined the best of our cultural heritage with all that science and technology has to offer as the basis of a good life. This is based on the basic foundation of:

Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah

Sarve Santuh Niramaya

Sarve Bhadrani Pashyant

Ma Kashchit Dukh Bhag Bhavet.

(Let everyone be happy, Let everyone be healthy,
See everyone with respect and Let no one suffer.)

It would be inappropriate for me to dwell at any length upon the programmes of reconstruction we had initiated, or those on which we are currently engaged, in the present context. However,

I would like to emphasise a few features of these programmes which are related to tolerance as one of the central concerns of our times. The first step taken by the people and the leaders of India, after 1947, was to enshrine the Gandhian notion of secularism and tolerance in our Constitution, at the same time as we adopted it as the guiding principle of political life in the country. Small wonder, then, that we have been able to build up a humane society, resting upon liberal institutions, in the context of a religious plurality which is without a peer in the world. To suggest that this multi-religiosity on a truly epic scale does not pose any problem would be too romantic a statement. Nevertheless, our capacity to stimulate creative cultural interplay and cooperative social action between different religious communities is a capacity of which we are legitimately proud.

After fashioning a democratic polity on the basis of secularism, the people of India moved towards the objective of expanding their capacity for generating wealth through industrialisation. Here again, the quest for increasing production was married to a serious concern for equity in the distribution of the wealth generated among different classes and communities. Moreover, as I have highlighted elsewhere, we adopted the 'Middle Path' for achieving our economic goals. The term 'Middle Path' refers to changing packages of market and command systems as the basis of economic policy. Indeed, the economic reforms upon which we are currently engaged, reflect the application of the notion of the 'Middle Path' to the level of economic and technical development which we have already attained after four decades and more, of national endeavour subsequent to 1947.

But I must add that in arriving at harmonising of different ideas we have steadfastly stood up against injustice. We have been intolerant of apartheid. We have been intolerant of any discrimination on grounds of caste, creed, colour, sex or religion. For us tolerating injustice or discrimination is as abhorrent as being perpetrators of injustice or discrimination. We are intolerant of illiteracy and poverty and intolerant of all those ideas which subjugate the free and

noble spirit of man. We are intolerant of these so that the people can live in harmony and peace. We have sought to achieve this on the basis of truth and non-violence. Only such freedom would ensure an equilibrium which would lay the unshakable foundations of tolerance in the true sense.

The question, however, arises as to how to end the intolerance, prejudices, and social discrimination still prevalent in many parts of the world including India. It encompasses the whole issue of change of attitude through information, contact and cooperation and institutional change. The whole process is long and arduous. It involves the complex vista of social change. The heritage of human civilization has shown that only through greater interaction tolerance can increase. Our own country's history has shown that it attained greatness only when there was elimination of discrimination and promotion of tolerance. Gandhiji's principle of truth and non-violence has been a novel example. It can be a guiding spirit for greater tolerance at the global level and ensure an end to prejudice of any kind.

In a gathering of distinguished individuals who represent the Asia and Pacific region, I would finally like to touch briefly upon issues in foreign policy. I believe that the path which India has fashioned for herself in world affairs is integrally related to the Gandhian world view, and rests crucially on the twin principles of non-violence and tolerance. In the world of real politik, it is assumed that the power of a nation rests upon its military muscle. But Jawaharlal Nehru, who looked upon Gandhiji as his mentor, designed a foreign policy which sought to draw the peoples of different countries into mutually beneficial relations as the true basis of a durable and equitable world order. We have also laboured in various fora for a complete banishment of nuclear weapons from the armoury of the sovereign nations of the world.

As I dwell upon the cultural traditions of the countries located in the Asia and Pacific region, it is clear to me that the characteristics

of tolerance, catholicity and liberalism are characteristics which are central to our civilizational systems. Certainly, we in India have a lot to gain through interaction with the other great cultures of the Asia and Pacific region. At the same time as we share our own understanding of the secular and the spiritual with them, the continuation of this historical interaction will enrich and influence the entire world.

I am confident that the distinguished intellectuals, who have assembled here to fashion an agenda of inquiry and action that would give substance to the notion of tolerance as a central feature of human society, will be able to map out a programme that will guide us as to the manner in which our world can be transformed for the better. I can only end once again with the eternal incantation:

Tamaso Ma Jyotir Gamaya
Asato Ma Sad Gamaya
Mrityorma Amritam Gamaya

(Lead us from darkness to light
From untruth to truth
From death to immortality.)

SAARC and the Asian Century

ON BEHALF OF the people and Government of India, it is my privilege and pleasure to welcome you to our historic city of Delhi. We trust that your stay here will be both pleasant and rewarding. We are confident that through our purposeful discussions and deliberations over the next two days, we will successfully continue the process of strengthening regional cooperation in the true spirit of SAARC and in the best interest of our peoples.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation to Begum Khaleda Zia, for the vision and dedication with which she guided our association during the past two years. Madam Prime Minister, we greatly value your personal commitment to SAARC and we commend your efforts to promote goodwill, friendship and understanding in our region.

It gives us special pleasure to welcome the King of Bhutan, Mr Jigme Singye Wangchuck, and the President of the Republic of Maldives, Mr Maumoon Abdul Gayoom. Your Excellencies have witnessed first hand the inception and subsequent growth of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in its first decennial. Your advice and experience would be of immeasurable value in charting the course of our movement in the years to come.

May I also take this opportunity to welcome in our midst the Prime Minister of Nepal, Mr Man Mohan Adhikari; the President of Pakistan, Mr Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari; and the President of Sri Lanka, Mrs Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga. We shall greatly benefit from their wisdom and experience.

I would like to take this opportunity of paying tribute to the late President Mr Ranasinghe Premadasa of Sri Lanka in whose untimely demise SAARC has lost a valued friend and guide.

The United Nations has designated 1995, its fiftieth anniversary year, the Year of Tolerance. This is an expression of the hope that as we enter the twenty-first century, the forces of intolerance in their many manifestations, will be challenged and overcome by the international community and that tolerance, goodwill and amity will triumph. We must cherish ethnic, cultural and religious diversity and we must ensure that the aspiration expressed through the Year of Tolerance is not belied.

The global economic environment is undergoing rapid transformation of epochal dimension, one of the features of which is globalisation through regional consolidation and optimisation of regional markets, skills and resources. This enhances the voice of all constituent states and we, in our region, must participate in this process. South Asia cannot afford to fall back in the momentum of change and high aspiration which is sweeping across the world. Collective self interest has been the fundamental basis of regional cooperation all over the world. Those regional groupings that have succeeded have opened doors to free flow of goods, services, capital and people. This also is the route we have to adopt.

The external economic environment continues to be unfavourable for developing countries with the burden of external debt, negative terms of trade and commodity prices, high cost and conditionalities of credit, denial of access to advanced and new technologies, impact of exchange rate fluctuations and innovative forms of disguised and open protectionism drawing even on areas unrelated to trade. Regional economic interaction offers a different model of cooperation.

Secondly, the international trading system is coalescing into powerful regional trading and economic coalitions involving major economies. The successful conclusions of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations and establishment of World Trade Organisation (WTO) hold forth great challenges for us but some

opportunities as well. We can respond effectively to these global factors regionally, if we make preferential trading arrangements among ourselves and enhance our collective strength internationally.

In our quest for this future, we can take encouragement from the perceived historical shift that we are moving towards what is predicted will be the Asian Century. We have to ensure through our visionary actions that South Asia is part of this resurgence and does not become a backwater of the new Asia. By strength of numbers, talent and ability, we should, as we did fifty years ago at the dawn of the post-colonial era, be in the vanguard of the revival of Asia. This is the challenge of history before us, which we have to address and master.

Given the unprecedented changes taking place at the global level, the imperative to bring South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) into operation assumes greater dimension. It is heartening that we have taken the first step in this direction by signing the SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement at the last Summit in Dhaka. The Inter-Governmental Group has met several times and carried forward the negotiations to finalise trade concessions. It is essential for us to provide political impetus to effectively bring SAPTA into operation by the end of this year as agreed to at the Dhaka Summit.

For some time now, there has been an increasing expectation that our cooperation would be of some direct relevance to the economic activity in our countries. Our objective must be to work practically towards a free market of the countries of the region and integrate our economies to enhance their range and dynamism and our collective strength in the global trading community. When we are opening up our markets to the world and inviting global competition, it stands to reason that we join forces and fortify our collective strength in support of our own business communities.

Poverty eradication is central to our development strategies and will be the ultimate test of our policies as far as our people are concerned. The challenge of human development for countries in our region continues to be a formidable task. High levels of poverty, low levels of economic growth, a rapidly growing population and its increasing expectations are creating serious, even alarming socio-economic stresses and challenges in the region.

It is within the experience of India and other South Asian countries that economic growth by itself has not meant much to vast sections of the population, which have continued to live in hunger and ill-health and without shelter, clean drinking water and other essentials basic to a minimum level of life and human dignity. Therefore, we in South Asia have to change the very concept of 'growth' and in future when we talk of 'growth' we should mean uplift of the people in the larger sense, that is, of the broad base of society itself and not only sectoral advances, important as these sectoral changes may be in generating wealth and opportunities. If we build more schools, more hospitals, more informal institutions of credit that serve the needs of the poor and particularly women; if we have better food distribution systems and nutrition programmes that guarantee household food security and nutrition security to children; if we have production programmes for gainful and resource-related employment which is labour-intensive; these represent true 'growth' of the people in an integrated and organic sense and not as it may be narrowly understood in terms of statistics, indices and macro-economic projections. This is the message that comes across from the report of the Independent South Asian Commission on Poverty Alleviation.

In India, our development strategies have been formulated on the premise that all economic and social policy must subserve the primacy of the human being, and in particular, the poorest among them. It is in keeping with this that we have, while carrying out structural reforms, simultaneously expanded outlays on anti-poverty

and rural development programmes, education and health, so that the reform process embraces the weaker and more vulnerable segments of society. Social safety nets have been designed to protect the interests of workers and our overall objective is to evolve a pattern of growth which is employment oriented, which reduces the gap between urban and rural areas, which is environmentally sound and sustainable and above all which keeps the human being as the cynosure of our policies.

Since we last met, a number of major initiatives have been taken by our countries. A ministerial meeting on Women and Family Health was held in Kathmandu in November 1993. The Ministerial Declaration and the recommendations included in the Kathmandu Resolution on Women and Family Health are, indeed, very far-reaching and are eminently worth pursuing and we fully endorse them.

Women are the central force around which social change takes shape and that is why through successive commitments at the highest political levels we have sought to empower the women of India. I am happy to say that India has already prepared and circulated the National Plan of Action for the SAARC Decade of the Girl Child (1991-2000). Fundamental to this Plan will be assurance of equality of status for the girl child through special opportunities for her growth and development of her full potential as an individual and citizen in her own right. The prevailing social and cultural discrimination against the girl child, as evidenced by the disparities in the demographic and socio-economic indicators, is noted with deep concern. Therefore, the changing of social attitudes and behavioural practices towards the girl child is integral to, and of equal importance in this plan.

We are happy to note that the annual reviews of the situation of children in SAARC countries for the years 1993 and 1994 have been completed and indicate a reduction in infant mortality and

significant progress in the immunization programmes for children in the region. We must continue to further intensify our efforts for ensuring the survival, protection and development of our children, which is our investment in the future.

A SAARC Ministerial Conference on Disabled Persons was held in Islamabad in December 1993 and focused attention on the problems of disabled persons in the region. We must do everything possible to ensure that the maximum protection is afforded to them and to mitigate the pain and loneliness they suffer. We fully endorse the recommendations of the Conference and the Islamabad Resolution on Disabled persons. We are also happy to note that in pursuance of the Resolution, several activities and programmes for the protection of disabled persons have been undertaken in the region.

The SAARC Ministerial Conference on Youth was held in Male in May 1994 and dealt with a wide range of issues like education and vocational training for youth, health, especially AIDS and drug abuse problems, the role of young women in society, their empowerment and enhancement of their socio-economic status, environment conservation and the effects of rapid population growth. We fully endorse the report of the meeting and the 'Male Resolution on Youth'.

The Ministerial Conference of Finance/Planning Ministers held in Dhaka has, after serious substantive deliberations, made a number of excellent recommendations on poverty eradication. We fully endorse the report of the Conference. The ongoing economic reforms and structural adjustment measures in our countries and our strategies for poverty eradication are the fundamental issues of the day and we shall be happy to host the first round of meetings of the three-tier institutional mechanism recommended by the Ministers.

The cancer of drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking, with all its attendant problems must be stamped out. The state bears an

enormous socio-economic cost in terms of law enforcement, rehabilitation, medical assistance, combating violence and criminality and their disastrous effects on the people, in particular, the youth of our region. It is heartening to note that the regional initiatives we have taken on this issue, the SAARC convention on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, has been ratified by all member states. This is undoubtedly a major achievement for SAARC which provides us with a very effective instrument at the regional level to fight the menace of drugs. We in India are committed to implementing this convention and intensifying cooperation with countries in our region.

Over the years, despite having passed through difficult times, SAARC has evolved and grown, because all of us in it believe in the need for a forum for cooperation that will strengthen self reliance, provide mutual benefit and create a stable environment for peace, progress and stability in the region. Today, as we look to the future, it is time to move ahead with confidence gained from experience, to sharpen our focus, to consolidate our assets and use our strengths to create for people a vision, a hope and a reality at once inspiring, practical and meaningful.

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EVERY SAARC SUMMIT is a milestone of our united determined endeavour, on the road to regional cooperation. It generates hopes, provides reassurance, builds trust, strengthens confidence and deepens understanding. It also maintains the momentum of progress, opens up new initiatives, while consolidating past gains, provides impetus and engages in the very fundamental task of developing a regional perspective on issues of common concern and primarily on ways to fulfil one of the most important objectives of SAARC, to

promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia and to improve the quality of their life and there by help the process of promoting and strengthening collective self-reliance among the countries of South Asia.

The strength of our collective commitment and desire for a rapid growth in economic cooperation intensified our common efforts of poverty eradication, and of sustained all-round growth, should considerably widen the base of our cooperation and create closer ties through increasing interdependence. It is our firm resolve that we shall move with the utmost speed on the road to all-round cooperation.

Peace and prosperity being our message, it is through unity and dedication that we shall achieve our common objectives. We have had the opportunity to involve ourselves in all the developmental aspects of our countries, individually and of our region as a whole. Our discussions during the last two days marked by a spirit of goodwill and cooperation, were purposeful and constructive and covered a wide range of issues of bilateral and common interest to our nations which widens our perspective and also helps us in our relations outside the SAARC forum.

The Delhi Declaration which we have just adopted reflects our resolve to ensure peace, stability and prosperity in the region. Our determination to forge regional cohesion and to chart out a course which would be mutually reinforcing for our economies and societies and for our approach to the common challenges we face.

We have decided to declare 1995 as the 'SAARC Year of Poverty Eradication'. This reflects our determination to pursue our objective of eradicating poverty, preferably by the year 2002 A.D., as agreed in the last Summit. We have also decided to declare 1996 as 'The SAARC Year of Literacy'. Our commitment to the critical social sectors will continue to be strengthened.

We have resolved to ensure the SAARC Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) is brought into operation by the end of this year.

In response to the increasing expectations of our people for steps towards common prosperity, we decided to strengthen our focus on economic cooperation. SAARC Trade Fairs will be organised in most of the countries of our region and a meeting of captains of industry in SAARC countries would be held in India before the end of this year. This will not only strengthen people-to-people contacts but also give an opportunity to all our people to see the capabilities in manufacturing and industry of the region. It would also greatly enhance the process of economic cooperation among the private sector in our region with a view to encouraging them to participate substantively in the developmental process underway in the region.

In short, while ensuring the momentum of cooperation in all the important social sectors relating to women and children as well as strengthening cooperation for combating the scourge of drug and terrorism and also cooperative action in areas like rural development, environment, science and technology, agriculture and communications, our primary focus at this Summit has been on 'Poverty Eradication and Economic Cooperation'. We have taken one more step towards developing SAARC into an effective vehicle for maximising collective self-reliance and advancement in the region by continuing to harness the complementarities of the countries of the region in a positive manner.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to you, for the excellent support and constructive cooperation extended to me during the past two days. I would like to assure you that it would be India's endeavour to ensure that the momentum generated by our collective efforts would be sustained and progress achieved in the areas we have identified for cooperation. I am strengthened by the

knowledge that in this endeavour I will have your understanding and support.

Our distinguished Foreign Ministers, who have been ensuring effective implementation of our decisions and directives and have made an invaluable contribution to the success of the Summit deserve our sincere gratitude and appreciation. We must also thank our Foreign Secretaries and senior officials who have worked very hard for the success of the Summit. We also extend our thanks and appreciation to our distinguished Secretary General and his colleagues in the Secretariat. Finally, I would like to thank all those who have worked tirelessly behind the scene to contribute to the success of this Summit.

For India, it was an honour and a privilege to host the Eighth Summit. We have been delighted to have you amongst us. We are happy to have been able to help further the process of regional cooperation and strengthen the climate of goodwill, friendship and in which we can all look into the future with confidence.

Indo-France Multifaceted Relationship

ON BEHALF OF my delegation, and on my own behalf, allow me to express my deep appreciation for the warm reception and gracious hospitality that you have extended to us. I have pleasant memories of my several visits to France over the years, and am delighted to visit your great country again at a time when a new government has just

Speech at the banquet hosted in his honour by the Premier of France, Mr Alain Juppe, Paris, 13 June 1995

taken over. I appreciate this early opportunity to acquaint myself with France's new dispensation.

The talks that I have had with you this evening, and my interaction yesterday with President Chirac, and with senior leaders of your Parliament and Government today, have been most productive and useful. I am confident that they will yield beneficial results in terms of concrete programmes for mutually beneficial cooperation, and that they will enhance the substance and tempo of the relations between our two countries.

Ours is a relationship of long standing, based on strong historical links, cultural affinities, and a common commitment to democratic values and individual liberties under the rule of law. The mutual comprehension and close cooperation that we have enjoyed over the years have invariably surmounted barriers of alignments and power blocs. Both our countries have in the contemporary world demonstrated a steadfast attachment to their independence of judgement and their belief in the application of democratic principles to international relations. We believe that in the prevailing world order, it is more important than ever for India and France to consult together and to intensify cooperation in the international arena in the interests of global harmony and cooperation to global benefit.

In democratic societies like ours, the basis of a stable and enduring bilateral relationship has to be the broadest possible involvement in it of various segments of society. The development of self-sustaining interest in each other among our peoples, by bringing to them the rich cultural and artistic heritages of our respective civilizations, is an important achievement. I am happy to note that India will be participating as 'the country of honour' in the prestigious Avignon Festival to be held in July. Such events provide nourishing channels of communication and understanding between peoples, which is the basic stimulus for amity and cooperation.

Mr Prime Minister, when I last visited your country nearly three years ago, India had just begun its process of economic reform. These policies have now been consolidated as part of a continuous process. They have begun to yield notable results, releasing new energies in our economy that hold great promise. Today, India is very much a part of the economic dynamism of Asia that is rapidly transforming the region into a major force in the world economy.

The multifaceted India-France relationship covers the gamut from high technology areas like satellite launches and aviation technology to agriculture and rural development. The momentum of India's economic reform has however not yet generated a matching upswing in the areas of trade, investment, technology transfer and joint ventures. With domestic deregulation and the opening up of virtually all sectors of our economy to foreign investment, we believe that India has much to offer French business and industry in terms of a propitious climate for collaboration to mutual benefit. We look forward to increased interaction in this area.

We recognise that it is essential for business and industry on both sides to make use of the opportunities that have opened up so that we can achieve the true potential of our economic relations. It is also important for the Government to act as catalyst, and it is in this spirit that I have brought along with me a high-level business delegation. Their interaction with French counterparts over the last two days should impart further impetus to our trade and economic relations.

I have touched upon some aspects of the Indo-French bilateral relationship not only to indicate its intrinsic worth and promise but also to stress its stabilising characteristics in an unsettled world. Both the Indian and French societies have accepted multicultural influences and become richer for it. Both derive sustenance and gravity from rich civilizational sources. Both have strong traditions of democracy, and the determination to achieve domestic harmony

and growth. These are virtues that can anchor bewildered societies to the sound pillars of democracy, the rule of law, a commitment to economic, technological and cultural excellence, and to action directed towards the common good. It is a mission in which India would be happy to have France as a companion and partner.

VII

Interviews

Reforms and All-round Economic Improvements

QUESTION : MR PRIME MINISTER, India has undergone a sea change in terms of economic reforms. At this point what would you consider to be the key achievement?

PRIME MINISTER : I consider the quiet confidence of the people of India in the economic reforms its most reassuring feature and its key achievement. There is an air of optimism in India on the economic front which is shared by all—investors, workers and consumers. People even the initial sceptics, have begun to see the rationale for reforms and the need for going about it in a steady manner. There has been an all-round improvement in the performance of the economy. It is true that problems remain in many sectors but it is significant that most people see reforms as the solution.

QUESTION : Similarly, which are the areas which you feel have not improved sufficiently?

PRIME MINISTER: I would hesitate to claim for any sector that we have improved sufficiently. We are a large nation with a long path of development ahead of us. I am happy about the progress achieved in exports, in controlling inflation, in foreign investment, in foreign exchange and foodgrain reserves and in the overall growth of the economy. But there is considerable room for improvement in all these spheres just as there is in the development and welfare programmes in which we have increased our allocation manifold but are still trying to draw resources from elsewhere to augment available funds. The same is the case with investment in infrastructure projects where our needs are gigantic.

QUESTION: Reports have suggested that while the Central Government is deeply committed to reforms, it is having difficulties getting its message across at the State and Provincial level. Is this correct?

PRIME MINISTER: I am aware of such reports. I feel they are based on earlier, outdated perceptions. It cannot be denied that in a federal system, such as ours, State governments will move at different speeds. But I can already see a healthy competition developing among them as they vie for investment.

QUESTION: What about the private sector with vested interests? Is it frustrating your effort—at a political level?

PRIME MINISTER: No private company in India controls the Government of the country or its policies. Government frames its policies keeping the interests of the people in mind. It is answerable to the people for these. My policies have been very successful both in popularity and in results and I do not see anyone being able to frustrate my Government's efforts.

QUESTION: India went close to bankruptcy in 1991. On reflection what were the thoughts that went through your mind at the time? What were your contingency plans?

PRIME MINISTER: There were several short term measures we had to take in 1991 to meet the economic crisis. Happily, we are out of it. The inherent resilience of the economy has reasserted its strength. The time now is to build for the future through sound investment in human resources and infrastructure development.

QUESTION: How is India doing in terms of foreign reserves and balance of payment? How is your debt position?

PRIME MINISTER: In the last three years, the increase in the debt has slowed down. Thus, in 1990-91, the debt grew by over \$ 8 billion. In

1991-92 and 1992-93, the increase was only about \$3 billion per year. In 1993-94, the debt increased by \$0.3 billion in the first half of the year. At the same time our foreign currency reserves have been growing rapidly and they are now of the order of \$ 18 billion. Thus, while the external debt has grown more slowly, we are also in a more comfortable position to meet our debt service obligations. There was an impressive growth of 20 per cent in exports last year. This trend continues this year, though at a slightly slower pace of around 9 per cent. The overall balance of payments position has improved considerably.

QUESTION: Your ministers have said that India is on a growth path of about 5 per cent—on average—to the end of the decade. Are you confident that the targets can be met?

PRIME MINISTER: The rate of increase of Gross Domestic Product has been about 4 per cent for the last two years. We are hopeful that we would be touching 5 per cent very soon. In 1993-94, industrial production has grown by 3 per cent which is an improvement over the growth rate of 1.8 per cent recorded in 1992-93. During the first two months of the current financial year industrial production has registered a healthy growth, particularly in the capital goods sector. Agricultural production has also been showing an increase. I am confident that we will be able to achieve a growth rate of 5 per cent.

QUESTION: What are your main strategies in trying to maintain that growth?

PRIME MINISTER: The strategy of our growth has now been well established. We are working towards stimulating the private sector by introducing a moderate tax regime and giving greater freedom of operation to it. At the same time the private sector is being encouraged to enter into key infrastructural areas where the public sector is hampered by lack of resources. You are aware that we have taken a number of steps to open the economy both to foreign trade and

foreign investment. Our overall performance has given foreign investors the necessary confidence to come and invest in India. We would thus make the best use of the opportunities available within the country and outside for using our resources productively and efficiently.

QUESTION: You went to the United States with your Finance Minister in May to 'sell' India as an investment destination. How did the trip go?

PRIME MINISTER: My visit to the United States in May was part of the ongoing dialogue between our two countries and provided me with the opportunity of having very useful discussions with President Clinton. During the visit, we had occasion to meet the US business community and I found their response to our economic reform process very positive.

QUESTION: I understand the level of foreign investment is picking up—but mostly in equities and bonds. Is this true? If it is, how can you translate some of that into direct investment?

PRIME MINISTER: Foreign direct investment approved since 1991 has touched US \$6.5 billion. This is many times the foreign direct investment approved in the entire decade of the 1980s. The pace of actual implementation of direct investment projects has picked up and will become more visible. Companies accessing funds through Euro-equity issues will also use such resources for expansion and for execution of new projects. This is distinct from the substantial increase in foreign portfolio investment through investment by institutional investors and actual placement of Euro equity issues by Indian companies. Investment in bonds and shares involves only a financial transaction and is naturally quicker than direct investment coming by way of projects.

QUESTION: Can you please outline the key industrial sectors in which you want to see a build up of foreign investment?

PRIME MINISTER: The Industrial Policy of 1991 listed a number of industries as priority areas for foreign investment. While we welcome all foreign investment, those sectors are of special interest to us. I would specifically mention, however, that I am keen to see greater investment flow into key infrastructure sectors such as power, communications, petroleum, telecom, roads and ports etc. This would have spin-off benefits to all sectors of the economy.

QUESTION: China has been particularly successful in attracting foreign investment. Yet India has a more established wealth and a sizeable middle-class which would make it even more attractive than China. Are you disappointed that India's share of FID is still low?

PRIME MINISTER: I have already indicated the volume of investment that has been approved since 1991. We are expecting that this will grow still further as more companies become aware of the benefits of coming to India. I do not think comparison of investment flows to different countries are meaningful. Each country adopts its own pace and timing and the flow of investment will vary accordingly.

QUESTION: Recently, the Australian Government released a report on India and suggested that India has an image problem in attracting foreign investment. Do you agree with this observation?

PRIME MINISTER: I think the so called image problem is a thing of the past. The kind of response I have received during my visits abroad would suggest that India has become a very attractive destination for investment.

The Australian Government's report entitled "India—the Midnight Hour" does also suggest that the Indian economy is changing and that India has the potential for emerging as an important economic powerhouse in the future.

QUESTION: The report singles out bureaucratic red-tape as a key area of concern among foreign investors. Your Government has been trying to streamline the system—how far have you gone?

PRIME MINISTER: I have been told of bureaucratic red-tape being a concern of foreign investors. This was more in the early phase of our economic reform programme. By now, I think the attitudes and approach have by and large adjusted to the changed environment. It is true that at the lower levels there may still be problems. We, along with State governments, are making all efforts to change this.

QUESTION: The United States Government is particularly concerned about India's record on intellectual property rights. Were you able to allay its concerns during your trip?

PRIME MINISTER: We have accepted the results of the Uruguay Round of negotiations including the TRIPS Agreement. We will stand by commitments made there on the issue of intellectual property rights.

QUESTION: Would you like to see India become part of APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation) grouping?

PRIME MINISTER: The Asia-Pacific region has been showing a dynamic rate of economic growth. India is a very much part of the region and is a significant economic entity in itself. There is increasing cooperation between India and the Asia-Pacific region, with the liberalisation of the Indian economy and the higher rates of growth that it is expected to achieve. Linkages in terms of trade investment and transfer of technology within the region are intensifying. In keeping with the concept of open regionalism, and in view of the advances in economic terms that are taking place in the region and particularly in India, it is only to be expected that there would be advantages to APEC and to India in a much closer relationship between the two.

QUESTION: Are you disappointed that the relation between Australia and India is not stronger? What would you do to improve that relationship?

PRIME MINISTER: Our relations with Australia continue to be excellent. Recently, our Vice President paid a very successful visit and we hope that Prime Minister Keating will visit us in the near future. India and Australia are both members of the Commonwealth and have many things in common. We wish not only to further strengthen our relations but also hope that the economic potential in our ties which is so evident will be fully realised so as to make the relationship one of growing benefit to our peoples.

QUESTION: Your Government had warmly welcomed Singapore's Prime Minister during his visit to Delhi earlier this year. Is there a strong economic linkage between the two countries?

PRIME MINISTER: The visit to India of Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong in January 1994 and my own recent visit to Singapore underline the new orientation of the foreign policies of India and Singapore in current regional interaction. Relations between the two countries are underpinned by the vast potential that exists for stronger economic ties.

At a time when India's economy is opening up, Singapore is building up the external component of its economy. Within this ambience, there exists the possibility of promoting synergistic linkages that can combine the strengths of both the economies: India's huge domestic market, a large middle-class of about 200 million people, skilled manpower and a massive industrial infrastructure on the one hand, and Singapore's capital, its expertise in management, services and international trade on the other.

Towards a New World Order

QUESTION: SOME MOMENTOUS changes have taken place in this part of the world in the past few years leading to expectations of a 'New World Order'. What is the relevance of Indo-Turkish relations, particularly in the context of their common belief in democracy, secularism and free market economy?

PRIME MINISTER: The end of the cold war has brought to an end the division of the world in the international order marked by intense rivalry between two rival unitary blocs. The de-ideologisation of international relations facilitates a fresh approach to common problems being faced by humankind. This provides a valuable opportunity for strengthening the forces of democracy and secularism worldwide. Whereas the democratic ideal is almost universally accepted, the secular ideal is under attack by forces of religious extremism and this should be combated by countries like India and Turkey. Developing countries continue to face challenges in their quest for development. Most of them have adopted policies that provide greater scope for enterprise, innovation and the operation of market forces. Their fortunes are now more directly linked to critical issues like debt service, capital flows, access to technology, market access and commodity prices. They have to cooperate closely among themselves to promote their economic development and for building a more equitable international economic order.

QUESTION: What role can India and Turkey play together in various regional and international affairs?

PRIME MINISTER: As two influential countries in the world with rich cultural traditions and values, India and Turkey can effectively cooperate in the cause of democracy, secularism and mutually

beneficial economic interaction. The two countries can also play a stabilising political role in the region in order to ensure that existing frontiers are maintained and stabilised, and the explosion of micro-nationalist sentiment and demands that threaten established sovereign states contained. Our two countries already have the experience of fruitfully cooperating at the UN on issues like international terrorism and drug trafficking. We can build on that through constant dialogue and consultations at the political level. Yet another promising dimension of this relationship is cooperation in strengthening the momentum for liberalisation of the structure of international trade and for a more equitable sharing of global resources.

QUESTION: Now that the Non-Aligned Movement is undergoing a transformation with greater focus on third world problems and getting a better deal for third world countries in the North-South dialogue, devoid of cold war rhetoric, Turkey is a developing country eager to develop its relations with other developing countries with which it shared many peculiarities as well as thoughts regarding problems faced by the developing countries. What is the scope of Indo-Turkish cooperation within this context?

PRIME MINISTER: The Non-Aligned Movement has acquired a new relevance with the end of the cold war. Our focus has shifted from issues like decolonisation and the anti-apartheid struggle to establishing the contours of a just and equitable world order. But there are challenges, following the end of the cold war, to global stability in the form of international terrorism, fundamentalism and sectarian conflicts. The threats to countries shaping their own course of socio-economic development have not diminished. The Non-Aligned Movement provides both the developing and the developed countries a forum to tackle these issues without ideological constraints and develop a universal agenda for genuine freedom in which socio-economic growth can be promoted through mutual cooperation. As two developing countries, we share common interests in seeking worldwide peace and stability, improving the environment for eco-

conomic and commercial interaction among states, and concessional financial assistance to the developing countries.

QUESTION: India and Turkey have cooperated at the United Nations on the issue of terrorism. What do you think should be the attitude of the international community regarding terrorism and other similar menace humanity faces?

PRIME MINISTER: While we are satisfied with the cooperation between our two countries at the UN on the question of terrorism, more is possible and indeed desirable. Indo-Turkish cooperation in this field is of special relevance. We feel that the opposition of the international community to terrorism—in particular, cross-border terrorism—should be total and unqualified. We need to be unremitting in our condemnation of the forces and countries which provide sustenance to terrorism under one pretext or the other. It needs to be brought home to them that the scourge of terrorism, which affects the innocent most, cannot be the answer to any problem, nor should it be utilised to achieve ulterior political gains. Only dialogue, and the fostering of harmony, can lead to meaningful solutions of problems and prevent the degeneration of nations and societies into rancour and conflict.

QUESTION: Besides joint efforts against terrorism, in what other fields can Turkey and India collaborate and cooperate in the international forums?

PRIME MINISTER: Among other things, India and Turkey can cooperate in international forums on ways to strengthen democracy, fight the growing menace of drug trafficking, and in improving the climate for international economic and commercial relations. We can work together for the restructuring of the United Nations in the post-cold war period with a view to promoting its further democratisation. We would also like to work together with Turkey and other like-minded countries in developing cooperation with Central Asian countries.

India and Turkey can cooperate to a significant effect in promoting regional peace, stability and cooperation.

QUESTION: After a long lull in ties due to some extraneous factors and despite the strong will of the leadership of both countries for better relations, Turkey and India have been trying to restructure their relations during the past few years, particularly during the Rajiv Gandhi era. How do you see the future of these ties both in the political and cultural areas, most particularly in the fields of economy, trade and scientific and technological cooperation?

PRIME MINISTER: The field for development of our bilateral relations is vast. In many respects, we find ourselves in a similar phase of historical growth and our experiences can be profitably shared through the activation of both the Government and non-government channels. As I said earlier, our traditions provide good foundations for bilateral cooperation in the service of regional and global peace and stability. The economic reforms in both the countries present before our peoples a unique opportunity for cooperation in the economic, commercial, scientific and technological sectors. We have a Joint Economic Committee and a Joint Business Council which provide an excellent framework for cooperation in a variety of areas.

QUESTION: Turkey has cultural, religious and ethnic ties with the newly independent republics of Central Asia and the Caucasus. India has traditional and historic links based on economy and trade, with these republics. In view of these, what could be the scope of cooperation between India and Turkey to help these republics modernise their economies, state set-up and establishing relations with the international community of nations?

PRIME MINISTER: The historical ties that our two countries have had with the peoples of Central Asia and the Caucasus, provide an excellent basis for cooperation between us in relation to these regions. The countries of these regions are currently engaged in the task of nation

building, and the scope for India-Turkey cooperation in promoting this is considerable. The possibilities for joint action in various sectors, e.g. training of personnel, educational exchanges, assistance in the growth of political and administrative institutions, market reforms, etc. deserve to be exploited to mutual benefit.

QUESTION: As a result of the great changes which the world experienced as of the end of the 1980s, the cold war era has come to an end, and the old bipolar order has given way to a 'New World Order' (or disorder), containing only a single pole. This new period has brought with it both opportunities and uncertainties. There are serious problems at present in the Caucasus and the Balkans. What role falls to the international community, and in the United Nations Security Council, in overcoming these problems. What must be done in order to resolve the problems in these trouble spots? Do you think that the structure of the United Nations Security Council allows it to respond adequately to today's needs?

PRIME MINISTER: The problems in the regions mentioned are a matter of international concern. These are challenges before the existing international institutions and the shape of the 21st century would be determined very largely by the international community's ability to deal with such challenges. We need to stress that a lasting solution to problems of this nature can be achieved on the basis of non-recognition of territorial acquisition through military or other subversive kind of action, respect for, and preservation of, the multiethnic and multireligious character of states, prevention of the fragmentation of existing states, and in a nutshell, peaceful coexistence that builds itself upon goodwill, understanding and cooperation among nations. This implies that the international community must bring its moral force to bear upon the contending sides in areas of conflict to devise political structures that will uphold these values. Ethnic exclusivism, whether incited from outside or bred within, must be disallowed. As for the UN, fifty years after its founding, it is time that its structures, especially that of the Security Council, were reviewed so that they come to reflect international realities.

QUESTION: Is it possible to reconcile the principles that make up the so-called 'New World Order' with the approach that the international community has taken to the dramas in the Caucasus and the Balkans?

PRIME MINISTER: I am not very clear what you wish to imply in the phrase 'principles of the New World Order'. India's approach to international issues, including those in the Balkans and the Caucasus, has been outlined above. I feel that the international community, in all forums, should act to prevent fragmentation of these societies which would otherwise, I am afraid, lead to unravelling of historical communities and generate forces of destabilisation which could affect regions far and wide.

QUESTION: Last, but definitely not the least, Mr Prime Minister, how do you evaluate the forthcoming first ever visit to India by President Demirel within the context of Indo-Turkish relations and regional cooperation?

PRIME MINISTER: We are looking forward to the visit of His Excellency the President whose reputation as a well-known statesman precedes him. I have no doubt that it will be a landmark visit and will provide much-needed stimulus to the growth of our bilateral relations. Our shared perspectives on many issues of concern have been touched upon in my earlier answers, and I have no doubt that such a high-level dialogue would help us better understand each other and thereby strengthen bilateral trust and cooperation.

QUESTION: Mr Prime Minister, do you have a message that you would like to convey to the Turkish people through our magazine?

PRIME MINISTER: I wish to convey to the Turkish people the warm good wishes of the people of India. Our ties are ancient, and in our history we have drawn inspiration from each other. The Turkish nationalist struggle under Kamaal Atatürk inspired our national leaders during

our independence struggle. Our two nations have immense opportunities for closer cooperation which can contribute significantly to regional and global peace, security and cooperation.

Towards Closer Linkages with Asian Countries

QUESTION: WILL THE political disturbance of the past few weeks derail the economic reforms?

PRIME MINISTER: I am not certain what political disturbance you are referring to. If it is to the defeat of my party in some States in the recent State Assembly elections, I would differ with you in terming it as a disturbance. Government changes in democracies and this is what happened in these elections. I am sure that the results were not at all a verdict of the people on the reforms. If this were so the new governments would not have so promptly expressed their willingness to go ahead with the reforms. As for my Government, I have already categorically reaffirmed my commitment. There is no question of any roll-back.

QUESTION: Will there be any substantive changes to economic/social welfare policies? Or is it a question of better presentation to the Indian public?

PRIME MINISTER: I have always been aware of my responsibility towards removing poverty and ensuring the development of the weaker sections of society. This is why I advocated and followed the 'Middle Path'. The reforms are a two pronged process: growth-oriented

policies for the nation and special development programmes for the poor, bypassing market forces. Without growth, investment and sound fiscal policies there can be no development. By encouraging the private sector, it has been my effort to conserve Government's resources for the social sector, such as education, health and rural development. I had revamped the Public Distribution System as early as in January 1992, within months of starting the reforms and trebled the outlay on rural development.

There is certainly scope and need for better presentation of these programmes and policies. But more than that there is need for effective execution so that the people can see the benefits flowing to them. I will continue to strengthen development programmes.

QUESTION: Might not the problem be that reforms haven't gone far enough? Notably, India has an uncomfortable level of inflation which is partly caused by high government deficits?

PRIME MINISTER: You are presupposing that the reforms are creating a problem. As I have just explained, this is an erroneous impression.

You are right about inflation. This hurts the poor the most. I am conscious of need to ensure that prices are stable. My Government is taking necessary steps. Even here, I may point out that our achievement may have taken short of our goal, yet it is much better than that of many other countries.

QUESTION: You recently took direct control of Policy on Jammu & Kashmir. Can elections be held there soon? Can people and parties in the Kashmir Valley be persuaded to take part without some kind of reconciliation process first?

PRIME MINISTER: There is a perceptible improvement in the situation in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Militancy is on the decline. Many

young people have been weaned away from it. The people are also fed up with the violence of the militants.

Government is working to normalise conditions and reactivate the political process. Development works are being accelerated with increased allocations and by securing the participation of the people. The local administration is being reinvigorated. The cooperation and confidence of the people is steadily increasing. Work on delimitation of constituencies is being done and the voters list is being revised by the Election Commission. While it would not be possible to indicate at this juncture any specific time-frame for holding elections in the State, my Government is confident that as a result of the steps being taken the overall atmosphere for the democratic process will be strengthened, thus making elections feasible.

QUESTION: India and the United States are improving relations, as seen by the stream of top-level visits recently. But do you feel there is still some mistrust of India in Washington? Do you hope Americans can understand India's aspirations in world, regional affairs?

PRIME MINISTER: There have, indeed, been a number of high level exchanges between India and the United States during the past year. When I visited Washington in May 1994, President Clinton and I agreed that there was an unprecedented opportunity to free our relations from the distortions induced by the cold war and build a new partnership. Trade and investment have been the cornerstone of the expansion of Indo-US relations. But broadbased and diversified interaction is increasing in the political and defence fields, as well as on environmental issues, science and technology etc. In the United Nations our two countries continue to cooperate on a number of key issues such as peace-keeping. We are also cooperating in working towards a comprehensive test ban treaty and a verifiable ban on the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons.

It is of course true that our perspective on certain issues continue to differ. But then, no two countries can have a complete

identity of views on all issues—especially, when their historical and geopolitical circumstances are so different. Democracies must also take account of public opinion regarding their respective national interests.

I don't, however, see any fundamental conflict between the interests of India and of the US. Whatever attitudes existed during the cold war era, they have ended, by and large. Indeed, I see a growing understanding of our positions in Washington, and of the principles underlying our positions. The process of more frequent consultations that are now taking place on the various new challenges and opportunities of the post-cold war world provides the opportunity for finding common ground for Indo-US cooperation and for achieving better understanding and responsiveness for each other's aspirations and concerns. This will only enhance mutual trust.

QUESTION: Under your Prime Ministership, India and China have set aside their border disputes and are improving relations? How do you see this developing? Are you worried about China's military aid role in Burma and in Bay of Bengal?

PRIME MINISTER: Our relations with China are improving steadily and have acquired meaningful economic and political content in recent years. These are based on mutual respect and understanding, and have the maturity to be able to deal with issues where both countries might have different perspectives. The high level political dialogue with China has been useful in addressing difficult issues while the overall improvement in relations have created a climate within which it is possible to discuss such issues calmly and rationally. The prospects for cooperation between India and China are bright.

India is aware of Chinese military activities in the Bay of Bengal area very close to our maritime and territorial borders. We have raised this with China and Myanmar more than once. China has

assured us that their military cooperation with Myanmar and in the region does not distort the military balance; it is for the legitimate defence needs of the recipients and has no conditions attached. Myanmar has said that upgradation of their capability is not directed against any country and has reaffirmed its strong desire to develop cordial relations with India.

QUESTION: We hear a lot about “Asian values”—mostly from East and South-East Asia—counterposed against those of the West. Where do you see India in this debate?

PRIME MINISTER: Values do not have to be counterposed against any other. Asian values have always existed. They are merely being articulated once again with the Asian resurgence which is now taking place with international acclaim. We remain a part of the larger international community to which we belong and the Asian values we are rediscovering are in harmony with these.

India is a part of Asia and the globalisation of its economy that it is bringing about is in considerable part a reactivation of the interaction that existed in the past with its neighbours in Asia. We seek to share our experience in development and attain higher levels of growth through closer economic and commercial cooperation.

QUESTION: Is India keen on more participation in regional economic forums, such as APEC? What are the messages India wants to get across in East and South-East Asia?

PRIME MINISTER: Yes, India as a significant economy in the Asian region, feels that its participation in regional economic forums, such as APEC is both necessary and contributive. India has a major stake in the APEC economies with 54 per cent of its foreign direct investment coming from these countries and 40 per cent of its export going to these countries. The message that I have tried to get across in East and South-East Asia during my visits there and in my

interaction with their political and business leaders is that India and Indian business is now 'looking East' and in policy terms is ready for a new and productive partnership.

India believes in a common destiny for Asia. East and South Asia are the regions with which we have enjoyed centuries' old historic and cultural linkages. With India's desire to integrate its economy with the global mainstream and outward-looking economic policies of these regions, new opportunities have sprung up for enhanced and diversified cooperation. India is endowed with vast market, abundant natural resources, good business infrastructure and a large reservoir of managerial and technological talent. Several countries in East and South-East Asia have investible surplus and marketing skills. This immediately establishes a complementarity between our economies. We look forward to forging closer and multidimensional linkages with the countries in East and South-East Asia. I perceive immense potential to work together for betterment of our people and to make the next century the 'Asian Century'.

QUESTION: Would you like to see the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) extended in the forthcoming review? If so, with what changes? And do you see India joining or cooperating with the Missile Technology Control Regime?

PRIME MINISTER: India does not have to take a position on the extension of the NPT since we are not a signatory. We did not sign because the NPT, unlike treaties like the CWC and the BWC, Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention, which ban the other weapons of mass destruction, legitimises the possession of nuclear weapons in the hands of the present nuclear weapon powers; it does not seek the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. It is, therefore, fundamentally flawed.

In fact, the NPT permits vertical proliferation; it puts no curbs on the manufacture, stockpiling and refinement of the nuclear weapons held by the nuclear weapon states.

Unlike other international treaties, the NPT imposes unequal obligations; the undertaking assumed by non-nuclear weapon states are obligatory, those by the nuclear weapon states are not.

Many members of the NPT now share these views. I hope they will use the next Review Conference to amend the Treaty to correct these flaws. Only a comprehensive, universal and non-discriminatory Treaty can achieve the goal of genuine nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

On the MTCR, we have had a first exchange of views last year at the working level. The MTCR Quad briefed Indian Officials on how the regime functions; these contacts can continue if necessary. Our record in preventing the misuse of sensitive technologies is particularly good, and acknowledged to be so by others, even though we are not members of either the MTCR or other ad hoc control regimes.

Encouraging Results and Towards a Robust Economy

QUESTION: MR PRIME MINISTER, kindly state the main achievements of your Government on the economic front, foreign affairs and the internal situation during the year 1994, which has just gone by. What are the areas where you think the country and the Government could have done better during the year?

PRIME MINISTER: It is now over 3 years since my Government embarked on economic reforms and stepped up investment in the social sector and key areas of the economy. The economic health of

the country can be gauged from the improved performance of both agriculture and industry last year. The growth in the manufacturing sector in the first four months of the year was 9 per cent which is very encouraging. Exports, foreign exchange reserves, food-stocks: all reflect the robustness of the economy. Above all, the investment intentions give an indication of the confidence of foreign and domestic investors. Last year Rs. 45,000 crore was raised in the primary market and a similar amount was disbursed by our financial institutions. Taken together, this figure is almost three times the resources raised by the corporate sector on an average in the years preceding reforms. Similarly, investment in the social sector has multiplied as Government has channelled its resources into vital areas like education, health, rural development and welfare of the weaker sections.

Last year saw many important steps forward in consolidating our relations with all the major countries around the world. My visits to Germany, the United Kingdom, the United States, Russia, Vietnam and Singapore gave me an opportunity to strengthen bilateral ties in various areas. We continue to pursue an active foreign policy that seeks to strengthen friendship and cooperation where it exists and overcome differences wherever they come up. Our relations with our neighbours progressed well, except, I regret to say, with Pakistan, which continues to spurn our offer of goodwill and cooperation to establish good-neighbourly relations between our two countries. With the United States, we are building up, in the post-cold war era, a relationship of understanding and of cooperation in various areas, particularly in the economic and commercial fields. The Moscow Declaration, signed during my visit to the Russian Federation last year, underlines the challenges faced by pluralistic states and their determination to meet such challenges. My visits to Germany and the United Kingdom reinforced the all-round development of our bilateral relations in the cause of global peace and stability. In visiting Vietnam and Singapore, I was only stressing India's interest in strengthening cooperation with these important countries of Asia, to which we all belong.

The internal situation in the country showed further improvement. The normalcy restored in Punjab was followed up with an encouraging revival of economic activity. The situation in J&K improved perceptibly. Development works were accelerated and a beginning was made towards reviving the political process. In the North-East also we demonstrated our resolve to curb disruptive elements.

There is, of course, considerable scope for improvement. Economic growth has to be accelerated and determined effort has to be made to eradicate poverty. The rate of inflation has to be controlled and reduced further. These are all things on which I intend to concentrate my attention this year.

QUESTION: Governing a country of India's size and diversity with all the accompanying problems is always a challenge. Still certain tasks are more challenging than others. What are the main challenges facing India in the year 1995 and what is your strategy to handle them?

PRIME MINISTER: The biggest challenge before us today is that of eradicating poverty. This can be achieved only with careful macro and micro level policies and programmes. Our economic policy must ensure that investment grows, particularly in the infrastructure, productivity increases and prices are kept under control. Unless this is done, there can be no economic growth. No programme for eradicating poverty can succeed unless the economy is sound. At the same time, social awareness has to be increased among the poor through education. Social and economic disparities have to be reduced. It is on the bedrock of such equitable economic and social policies, that we have to formulate and execute development programmes which increase employment opportunities and ensure a better life to the weaker sections.

QUESTION: You have just declared unequivocally your commitment to economic reforms and affirmed that there will be no slowing down in

this policy. There are some who feel that economic reforms in fact need to be speeded up. Do you share their view? You have also spoken of a possibility of 'reorientation and fine tuning' based on a review of performance. Would you kindly elaborate your ideas on that?

PRIME MINISTER: Policies and programmes have to be constantly tuned and updated to keep them oriented to the objectives for which they have been formulated. The economic reforms in India have been tailored to our needs. They are progressing at a pace at which the economy can keep up. We do not have to conform to any theoretical framework or speed. I have already reaffirmed my commitment to the reforms. We have to ensure that the gains and the pains of the reforms are equally shared.

We will continue to eliminate procedural hindrances to create the necessary environment to allow entrepreneurship to grow. We will enhance support to the small-scale sector which gives employment to 140 lakh people directly. We have to encourage R&D in our country and acquire the capacity to generate technology. We have to ensure the all-round development of industry and agriculture to accelerate economic growth.

QUESTION: What impact will the reverses suffered by the Congress (I) in the recent Assembly elections have on the Government's economic and other policies?

PRIME MINISTER: Victory and defeat are part of the electoral process in a democracy. We have to understand and analyse the reasons for the defeat. I do not accept the view that the vote is a verdict against the economic reforms. However, if some development programmes of the Government have not reached the people, we will have to take corrective steps and ensure their proper implementation. The misconceptions about the reforms being spread by some interested parties also need to be countered. We have to educate the masses in

their own idiom about the benefits that rapid industrialisation will bring to them.

QUESTION: Only a few months ago India presented a picture of political and economic stability. Suddenly there is a perception that India is in for a period of political instability and that there is a crisis of confidence both in the Government and the ruling Party. Do you share this view?

PRIME MINISTER: I disagree with the view that there is political instability in the country today. It is true that the defeat of the Congress Party in some of the States last year was a setback for us but this has not led to a picture of instability, as you put it. A change of the government in a democracy does not imply a crisis of confidence. If anything it shows the strength of the political system. In a political system such as ours where State governments often have a political party different from the party in the Centre, the defeat of a party in one State should not affect the stability of the governments in other States or at the Centre. This is borne out by similar situations in several other democratic countries.

QUESTION: Has the thought of holding general elections to the Lok Sabha ahead of 1996 crossed your mind? In what circumstances would you go in for early Lok Sabha polls?

PRIME MINISTER: This thought has not crossed my mind.

QUESTION: Mr Prime Minister, while your leadership has come in for praise in large measure both within the country and internationally, your critics say that there is a great degree of indecisiveness in your handling of burning issues. How would you respond to this criticism?

PRIME MINISTER: My critics should either accuse me of indecisiveness or of moving too fast with the reforms. Both certainly cannot be true at the same time. Indecisiveness on my part could not possibly have

produced the kind of changes the country has seen in the last three-and-a-half years. Many of the burning issues of three-and-a-half years ago are no longer burning now. Could I be immodest enough to take some credit for this change? Calm and dispassionate handling of a situation should not be confused with indecisiveness. I do not believe in the politics of gimmicks and knee jerk reactions. They may make good headlines but are not good for the country.

QUESTION: It is generally agreed that the situation in Kashmir has shown a marked improvement. When are elections likely there? Would India allow international observers to oversee these elections?

PRIME MINISTER: The aim of the Government is to further promote conditions that would be conducive to normalisation and reactivation of the political process in Jammu and Kashmir. Efforts are being made to accelerate development works by securing people's participation, reinvigorate the local administration and enhance the cooperation and confidence of the people in the administration. These are being monitored closely. With a view to proceeding towards the democratic process, the delimitation of constituencies is being done and the work of revision of the voters' list has been taken up by the Election Commission. A public debate is on regarding the various aspects of the democratic process. While it would not be possible and even desired to set dates or time-frames at this juncture, Government is committed to holding elections in the State. I am confident that as a result of the steps being taken, the overall atmosphere for the democratic process is getting strengthened, thus enhancing the prospects of election.

There have been no restrictions for people against visiting the State and there has been complete transparency. The question of international observers, appears unnecessary. We do not envisage any role for them.

QUESTION: Is the Government considering a review of TADA?

PRIME MINISTER: It (TADA) is being considered. We have got all the

options now before us and I have already said in public that this is a law which has sometimes been misused. But, it is also a law which was considered necessary when it was passed. Its validity has been upheld by the Supreme Court. Today we have to see what are the provisions which were responsible for the hardship caused to the people while applying this law, and what are the remedial measures that we have to take. Supreme Court has also given some guidelines, very useful guidelines and evidently we would like to follow the guidelines, at the same time we have to see what more can be done in order to alleviate the hardships and what are the options in that connection. These questions have been gone into. And now we are having the analysis in front of us and we will be able to consider what has to be done. Then this has to be seen also as a part of our compulsions under the code of conduct etc. So we will consider that also.

QUESTION: In other words you would look at the amendments to the law or repeal?

PRIME MINISTER: Options are open to us. But what I started saying is still valid. It was considered necessary that it is not a law which has completely become unnecessary. It had been misused in some cases. That misuse is not on, it is not acceptable. And the hardship that has been caused as a result of that misuse needs to be alleviated and prevented. These are the parameters. Subject to these parameters, we will take decisions; the options available have been analysed. They are now with us.

QUESTION: Sir, Mr Vajpayee says that the Indian political system is in a major crisis and it does not have the flexibility or the safeguard to provide stability to the government. What are your views on it?

PRIME MINISTER: I am not aware of the whole theme that he developed or he spoke about. The Indian system has, I think, stood the test of time by now. But of course as we go along, every system comes under

certain new strains and wisdom again lies in being alive to those strains. Not just to insist that they will go away. But to go into those things, and these are not party matters at all. These are matters connected with the system. I would like to know the views of other leaders also on this, because this is also constantly engaging my attention.

QUESTION: You also think that certain changes are to come about for greater flexibility?

PRIME MINISTER: I am convinced about the need to look into, monitor and understand the working of the system in greater detail. In that, if one finds some deficiency or the need for new measures in view of the new situations, we should always be willing to do that. But coming to specifics, I would not be in a position to comment on what Vajpayeeji has said and that is where, I am not able to give a sort of direct answer to your question.

Economic Reforms : an Irreversible Course

QUESTION: I WAS in India eight years ago, in 1986. Now I have been here for three-four days.

PRIME MINISTER: Then you should be in a position to appreciate the change much better. From day to day it becomes difficult to see this change. It is good that you are coming after a number of years so that what you saw eight years back and what you are able to see now—that contrast or whatever will be clear.

QUESTION: The contrast is visible. Having been here for a few days, it seems quite clear that the debate whether the reform will continue is inaccurate and that it will continue. So we would like to have your own sense of any potential problems in the way of continuing the economic reforms.

PRIME MINISTER: I am glad to say that the reforms will have less and less problems, less and less hurdles to cross. This is the conclusion I have arrived at after certain political setbacks to my Party in some elections recently. I myself was apprehensive about the reforms continuing because rhetoric of some of these parties was obviously critical of the reforms. They had been speaking in Parliament and outside but now it seems that what they were criticising was me and not the reforms which is welcome in democracy. And in two States it so happened that whatever they criticised, whatever the people thought they criticised was right from their point of view except the reforms because the new governments have embraced reforms even more enthusiastically than I had ever imagined they would.

QUESTION: Does it surprise you?

PRIME MINISTER: Well, it does surprise because the way they were talking about reforms was quite critical and I for one thought that in the interests of the country, there should be no change in the party in power in those States. Normally because I happen to be the President of my Party and it is quite natural for the President to see that the Party continues in power, but even more so because I thought the reforms would be in danger, the way they were talking against the reforms. Now it was almost a miraculous kind of change that happened and within days they changed their entire attitude. They are now more enthusiastic about the reforms than, maybe, some other Chief Ministers. But on the whole, there is a stronger consensus today and when I add West Bengal to this list where the Communist Party (Marxist) is in power and where we have nothing but brickbats from them on the policy, they have now completely switched to the reforms and liberalisation and

they seem to have done, within a very short time, something even better in their investment policies etc. than the other State governments. So when the entire spectrum is in favour of the reforms and liberalisation, I think I have some satisfaction to derive out of this fact.

QUESTION: Does that create possibilities that you can go even faster when you say that some of the opposition parties....

PRIME MINISTER: I would say 'yes', because whatever inhibitions I have had, as a person who started the reforms and would not like them to be scuttled in any way, I would have been much more careful. But now that this consensus has emerged, my inhibitions are really unnecessary. There may be differences in details. That we always have. Even in democracy, within parties having same system and same basic tenets, there will be differences in actual implementation and so on. That will continue. But on the whole we are now safe on an irreversible course. I do not see any party coming to power anywhere, in the States or at the Centre, promising to people that they will scrap the reforms if they come to power. That kind of thing I do not see happening.

QUESTION: Are there any concerns that you have about the course of things to be done?

PRIME MINISTER: Yes, I have concerns not on the reforms but on certain things which need to be done along with the reforms.

QUESTION: Such as?

PRIME MINISTER: For instance, we had anticipated very early—in fact from the day we started these reforms—certain consequences, such as some more funds coming to certain sections of the people and the other sections, poorer sections, being left behind. It is obvious because the trickle down effect of any induction of finances takes time. So we had, even at the beginning, planned to inject a massive amount of money from our own resources for rural development where we wanted people to have employment and not to suffer the inequality that will inevitably be there in the interregnum. And this has

worked to a large extent. But it appears now, looking back to these two States, that while the funds were flowing their actual use left much to be desired because it was being implemented by the State governments. I do not blame the State governments, but anyhow at the grass roots level, there seemed to have been some irregularities and some deficiencies and perhaps it was not enough. This is also quite possible that we injected large amounts but even larger amounts maybe necessary in future. We are thinking of those aspects and before we go to the elections to Parliament next year, I am sure, we will be streamlining all these things, making a much more realistic survey of what is being felt by the common people. Since we were taken by surprise in these two elections, until then we were more or less winning all the elections, so we were not careful enough to study the effect and so on. Now we are doing that. I have put the Government Departments on the job. My Members of Parliament are also looking into their respective constituencies how this is working and they are reporting back to me. So there is a much more realistic appraisal now and by the end of next two or three months, by May or June, we will be able to come up with a package which is much more realistic and which the people in general at the grass roots level will find much more acceptable.

QUESTION: May I come back to two things you said earlier—that now you don't have inhibitions or the fear that the reforms might be scuttled. Does this withdrawal of inhibition persuade you to move faster and in new directions?

The other point that you made was that these two governments have fallen in line much more than certain other governments. It seems to us that it is the Congress State governments which are not doing enough for reforms as well as Deve Gowda or Rama Rao or Jyoti Basu.

PRIME MINISTER: Deve Gowda is now in Davos.

QUESTION: Precisely, whereas some of your colleagues....

PRIME MINISTER: From my side, only a Member of Parliament has been sent. From their side, a Chief Minister who has just been victorious in elections has gone. He volunteered to go. He came to Calcutta to meet our industrialists at their meeting. He is the new champion now, as it were. This is how it is going on.

So on that score I am quite satisfied. In the Congress governments, you know, the approach has been a little different so far. We have been very restrictive about foreign investments etc. We had so many restrictions, hurdles and rules and regulations. All that deregulation has been done during the last three years. It is quite possible that some people who were brought up in that atmosphere of planned economy, controlled economy for the last forty years—and that has been the contribution of the Congress Government by and large—may have felt a little uneasy. I know for a fact that they are feeling uneasy, some of them are feeling genuinely uneasy—I am not saying that they are only making use of this for political purposes, some of them maybe, but not all—there are some who have genuine doubts whether this will work.

Some people talk about Mexico; some people talk about some other countries. I have nothing to say about other countries. But I think as a person coming from the grass roots level myself, I have perhaps the instinctive kind of knowledge of where things are likely to have gone wrong and I am not at all afraid that the doubts that appear in the minds of some of my colleagues in the party are at all realistic. The same doubts appeared in my mind. In the beginning when all these things were adumbrated, yes some doubts did arise in my mind because I was brought up in the same atmosphere in the same philosophy. Now what really decided the issue was the inevitability. We had nowhere else to go to. We had no other line to take. That was a kind of inevitability at that time. But over the months, within about five or six months, we thought it was not only inevitable but it is desirable and it is good for us. That is how our psychology developed. We being in the government, it developed a little faster. Those who are not in

government perhaps could not appreciate the way we were able to appreciate. Even today there may be some doubts lingering somewhere. Then, of course, you have the old theoreticians, the old economists, as many economists as you can imagine. And no two economists ever agree.

This is an open society, so the debate is intense. And debates sometimes can create doubts. But eventually debate is the only way to resolve doubts. So we have to pass through all these stages, from total rejection to some possibility of entertaining new ideas, thinking may be it is right. Then it comes to, yes it seems to be right. And then finally, it is right. These are all psychological stages. I think we are going through those stages and this is good because whatever comes out of this churning of ideas is really pucca; it is lasting.

QUESTION: Is democracy a friend of development or an enemy of development?

PRIME MINISTER: Not in the case of India in any case. I don't know what others say, but in our case it is not so. Again I tell you from my grass roots' experience. Democracy has helped development and the way people feel angry about things not happening is a very healthy anger and that is the real spur to development at that level. In addition to that if this anger is tempered with responsibility at those levels, which is what is now happening in the Panchayat system and so on, I think the whole thing is perfect. A Panchayat in a village is as responsible as Government of India. So this spirit has been transplanted right at the grass roots level. This April onwards, every village in India will have a Panchayat, which means that the same amount of thinking has to go on in that small microcosm as it goes on in the Government of India, maybe on a larger scale, country-wide scale. Maybe there again it is on a very small scale but at the same time the problems and the question marks that arise are more or less the same: Do we have a road first, or do we have a dam first, or do we have food first? What is it we want? So this privatisation which we are doing here is replicated there.

We are not really handing anything down there. That will never be accepted because they will say, we want this, we want that every thing together. That is the attitude now. But if they know that their resources are limited, as we know that our resources are limited at our level, there will be a new way of thinking that will develop all over the country.

QUESTION: What do you see India as in a decade or so? What is your vision of the role that India will play as a global economic power?

PRIME MINISTER: Well, I think this is a difficult question to answer. It depends on so many things that will supervene during the next ten years. But what normally one can say is that the vision is one of a strong, vibrant economy, completely open as an important part of the global economy, interacting with economies of other countries the world over and at the same time having transparency as a result of the democratic process and a lot of interaction between India and the other countries of the world because of this transparency. I feel that our economy will be even more secure from political upheavals. It will be neutral to political upheavals as the economies in many other Western democracies are. I may be putting it a little more positively. There may be some effects on the economy but normally they do not really allow import of too much political developments.

So I expect the life of the people to be smoother than it is today, less risky as a result of political changes. Today there is a great risk. The importance of political parties is much more in India and in developing countries where democracy is being practised than in the West. For instance, the ordinary citizen also has a lot of stake in the changes here. If one party which is strong comes to power, the scenario is different. If another party which is not strong comes to power, the scenario is entirely different. In fact, there can be instability etc. though the system in India is so good and it has been tested to such an extent that we do not really expect instability except for a very short while, if at all. So that stability is there politically.

You may be reading so much negative news about India, but really all this is one part of the story, or one side of the picture. On the other side, you find that people are getting more and more mature, democracy is becoming stronger and stronger and getting deeper and deeper into the country. This is the trend. So I find on the whole, ten years from now, India will be a much more affluent society, it will be much more stable in the sense that it will not be prone to all the buffeting by events and even politically. I think that after ten years the consciousness that will be developed as a result of this grass roots democracy functioning will be much more stable.

QUESTION: Can I switch the subject? You have spent a good deal of time and effort not only on economic reforms but on establishing a more predictable relationship both with China and the USA. What is your prognosis of the future of both these relationships? What potential problems do you see in either the Indo-US relationship, or India-China relationship?

PRIME MINISTER: Well, I think that we are firmly on the course of better mutual understanding which I think is the basis for everything. So far as US is concerned, they have told us and we have told them that the cold war relationship is over. There was a particular kind of relationship that we had during the cold war. That cannot be denied. In fact, when I went there, we had no reason to deny it. On the other hand we acknowledged it. And we said, how about the post-cold war era? Just forget about what we said two years ago, or five years or six years ago. You start afresh. We have no such inhibition any more now. We may have certain questions which were the outcome of the cold war days attitudes. Now we can slowly get out of them and for the future, keeping them aside, we can go ahead on the economic and other fronts in full speed and full steam so that the relations become closer and more lasting, firmer and more open in the sense that if I do not agree on anything, I am at liberty to tell you, I am free to tell you and you are free to tell me. It becomes a very transparent kind of relationship. This is a very desirable thing. And we both agreed that this should be so.

QUESTION: By the attitudes of cold war that still remain, you mean the nuclear issues which you decided to put aside?

PRIME MINISTER: I don't know whether I should be putting it into record, but I remember when I went along with Mrs Gandhi to USA, there were lots of snide comments and remarks that we were more or less in league with Communism, the Soviet Union. Now one heard these things from ordinary people. It is not as if they were opposed to us or anything, but that was the characterisation, that was at least the perception in certain quarters. Now all those things are tapering off. I do not say that they have disappeared, but they will disappear in course of time because facts are there for anyone to see. And particularly after my visit, I find that there is a much deeper understanding of India with a lot of businessmen and other people coming here, staying here, talking to their counterparts and making investment decisions and things like that. These are really cementing factors which I can see.

So this is how the old attitudes will disappear. For instance, now we do have a difference of opinion on the NPT. I find that the difference on NPT is taken as a fact of life between us. But there are so many aspects of nuclear disarmament apart from NPT which can be discussed. On those, we actually agree. In the communique or whatever you call it at the end of my visit, this was clearly brought out that total nuclear disarmament is the goal. If that goal is acknowledged jointly, then whatever the temporary difficulties or whatever the other aspects on which we may not immediately agree, the goal is something on which we agree, as a result of which on the chemical weapons convention and so many other things which are the offshoots of this process, we are able to agree and work together. That small portion on which we cannot agree, or do not agree, is relegated to its own place. I do not say it is unimportant, but its importance is not over-emphasised. That is it.

On China, I think we have had a very good understanding. You see, we had one important and rather ticklish, difficult question and

that is the boundary question. It is still there. Now what was happening earlier was as a result of that, there was some kind of tension and each thought that unless that boundary question is settled, we cannot possibly advance on other fronts in normalising relations. Suddenly we realised that this need not be so. So when I went to China, I said, 'look, this is going to take a longer time. We have a Joint Working Group going into the question of boundary.' This was set up when Rajiv Gandhi, my predecessor, visited China. At the time of my visit, I said, 'we have to do something to see that the JWG (Joint Working Group) process is not disturbed by incidents on the border. Something happens and suddenly each side somehow tends to become uncommunicative, tense and so on. This kind of thing should not happen.' They agreed; we agreed. For three or four months, we worked on the text of a peace and tranquillity agreement. That was signed. Now this has become such a boon to both the countries that we are able to go ahead with our economic, technical, cultural cooperation programmes much more rapidly with greater confidence in each other and the whole gamut of relations has become much more euphoric, much more encouraging. The Joint Working Group continues to work on the main question. So it is a total change of scenario as a result of one agreement.

QUESTION: In both cases, the strategy, if I may put it that way, seems to be that what we can leave alone, let us leave alone. But what about its application in the case of Pakistan?

PRIME MINISTER: India is a partisan problem there. If there are two parties in Pakistan, India becomes an electoral issue. Pakistan does not become an electoral issue in India. We have our own issues. So an electoral issue is something which will never die.

QUESTION: How do you get beyond this, since you are the bigger partner?

PRIME MINISTER: I know. I have been telling them, 'why do you quarrel about me? You quarrel about your own problems. You do not have to

think of me all the time if you don't want to. We are neighbours, yes. But that is a fact of life. There are many neighbours who are not on talking terms. So if we wish to be friends, let us be friendly. Otherwise I am not interfering in your affairs, you do not interfere in our affairs. There are lots of neighbours like that. I do not have to become a problem between you. So long as this happens, you will never be able to make up. I am not making Bangladesh a problem between the Bhartiya Janata Party and the Indian National Congress, or Janata Dal or whatever. They do not even figure here. We have our own problems to worry about. So please do not make India or relations with India a domestic problem.' This is my easy recipe to all our neighbours. And I have no trouble with any neighbour, not even with Pakistan. But we have unfortunately one question left from history and they are taking a stand which, according to us, is totally untenable, undesirable. They are not able to see that because their political compulsions do not permit them to see the truth. This is how I look at it. Maybe they look at it differently.

QUESTION: About China, you said, let us set aside the border question and get on with....

PRIME MINISTER: No, we are not setting it aside. What we are doing is, we are quietly working on it. We have not really wished it away, nor can we ever do that. But while you are working on it, you should not have daily troubles on the border. So this has been taken care of. The Joint Working Group's meetings are still going on every six months. I think there are cases where it has taken twenty years, twenty five years to settle things like that. So we are patiently working on it.

QUESTION: The reason you can't get a quiet dialogue with Pakistan is....

PRIME MINISTER: ... is because every day they have to talk about it. Have you counted the number of speeches she has made and the number of

silences which I have made? I have never talked about Pakistan except once, on the 15th of August. I never talked. There is nothing to talk. But they have nothing else to talk. This is the difference. I do not know if it is a genuine difficulty with them in their political process, but the moment this is not the case, I think we will be much happier—both of us.

QUESTION: Many of China's neighbours are worried about its defence spending and armaments. Does that concern India as well?

PRIME MINISTER: It is very difficult to answer that question. I think every country has the right to determine its own level of preparedness and have its own assessment of its own needs. But of course there is always the view that certain countries may be thinking of something more than defence. But I would rather not comment on this question. We have not really studied this in detail, although we have some idea of what they are doing and what other countries are doing. But on the whole, I think it is not fair on my part to comment anything, or make any comment on that. I have not really made my indepth study.

China is a very large country, a big country with big population. So what they think about their needs, defence needs is something for them to consider. This is what President Clinton also said when I went there. Some question was put to him and he said, each country has the right to determine the level of its defence preparedness and so on. But of course when you cross a particular line, people will look at you as doing something which is in excess of what is necessary. That kind of comment is very general and I do not want to make it in regard to China.

QUESTION: The results of elections have come. You say that you have no inhibition which is quite interesting. But a lot of people say and feel that perhaps because of the elections, India's reforms programme is slow.

PRIME MINISTER: That is totally wrong. I do not want to welcome my own defeat; I do not want to sound that way. What I say is, the next best is that the party which has won there has the same perceptions, has the

same programme, has the same thinking as my Party and my Government on a very important aspect of national life, i.e. the economy and the kind of very big changes that we have brought about in the last three years. It could really have been jeopardised if that party had taken the opposite view. This is what it is. It is the next best to me.

QUESTION: The second best?

PRIME MINISTER: The second best to me.

QUESTION: But how do you respond to the feeling that undoubtedly you have heard that the Government should do things more decisively, the things are taking a little longer?

PRIME MINISTER: Yes, in fact they will cooperate with me now. The State governments are doing it already. They are asking me how about this, how about that, this investment or that investment. They are also going to other countries and tying up things with our full support. You find that there is a lot of cooperation on these matters. At times they may make speeches against the Central Government. That, of course, every State government has to do for various compulsions. But apart from those things, I think the cooperation with them is quite good.

QUESTION: Are you saying that things may actually speed up as a result of this?

PRIME MINISTER: No, I will not have any inhibitions. West Bengal, for instance, when they were really criticising the policies right, left and centre in Parliament, out of Parliament, in Calcutta and everywhere, the going was becoming rough. Now that they themselves have gone to Singapore and brought private investment from Singapore, had MoUs signed and so on, to that extent the inhibition whatever I was feeling is gone.

QUESTION: For years India was the leader of the Non-Aligned Movement. It had a particular position in the world. Do you still aspire to play that role? If not what is the international role that you want to play?

PRIME MINISTER: On this I think Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had himself said that we are not really aspiring for any 'leadership' role. What we have already been doing and have always been doing is that we take very keen interest in world affairs, particularly in certain principles we have upheld, certain causes we have espoused and certain vision of the world being projected as our vision and that is how the questions in the Non-Aligned Movement have been looked at. India has been playing a very important role in the Non-Aligned Movement, whether we are Chairman or not. In fact, India became Chairman by force of circumstances, if not by choice. You know in 1983 Iraq was to be the Chairman, Iran objected and they had to find a quick substitute. India came as a quick substitute. It was very difficult for us to arrange for the Summit in three or four months. This is how India became the Chairman; otherwise we were not aspiring to be the Chairman.

So this is what it is. So this role is important along with the other countries and we have to find solutions to world problems. It only means that India feels that all these world problems need to be addressed, even from our individual point of view as a country. But we take a world view and this is not just today but for thousands of years. In our old texts, the world has been seen as one family. Now it is easy to say this today. But if this was said, say three thousand or four thousand years ago, you can see the mental frame of our ancestors. They did not really recognise any boundaries of this kind so far as humanity was concerned. So that was the approach and that will continue to be our approach. Naturally we have to live in a world where there are nation-states and their own interests and all these things are there. But then basically this world view of India has endured over the centuries.

QUESTION: China seems to have a different frame. The Chinese say that we are and will be a world power. That does not seem to be the Indian aspiration?

PRIME MINISTER: We don't have any aspiration to compete with others and be superior to them and so on. We want to be in the tee. We want to play an important role. That role will be both for our country as well as the world. We see the interests of India, India's own interests harmonising with those of the world and not as antagonistic to those of the other countries in the rest of the world. So I think this is more a kind of taking a constructive synthetic view where peaceful coexistence is important. Peace is important, peace not just meaning the absence of war, but real peace where there is harmony in the whole of humankind.

These are some of the concepts which have been developed in India and there is no way we find it either easy or even desirable to depart from those things. We add to this vision our own interests, our own role in this, promoting this world with but in a cooperative way.

QUESTION: Does it make you nervous when people compare India with China? Or is that a comparison that you welcome?

PRIME MINISTER: I welcome all discussions including comparisons, but I don't think I enter into any such discussion. I should not, because it is very difficult to compare countries which are not comparable in every way. There are some respects in which comparison is possible. There are other respects in which it is not possible. Any overall comparison, I don't think that should be done particularly by us, by academics, journalists and so on. It is a different thing but governments should mind their business rather than commenting on others.

The Expectations and Achievements

QUESTION: MR PRIME MINISTER what in your perception, are the major achievements of the Government under your stewardship of over three-and-a-half years?

PRIME MINISTER: There has been all-round progress in the country since June 1991 when my Government came to office. The production of foodgrains reached a record high of 182.03 million tonnes in 1993-94. This year it is expected to be 3 million tonnes higher. The foodgrains stock has also reached an unprecedented level of over 35 million tonnes. The production of nitrogenous fertilizers, in terms of nutrients, is expected to reach an all time record of 78.2 lakh tonnes this year and of phosphatic fertilizers to increase from 18.5 lakh tonnes in 1993-94 to 23 lakh tonnes in 1994-95. All this has become possible because of the policy of my Government to promote agriculture by increasing the minimum support price of foodgrains to reward farmers duly for their efforts.

In industry, during the first half of the year, production in the manufacturing sector increased by 8 per cent. It is satisfying to find that steady growth is now taking place across the board in the industrial sector. The wide ranging industrial deregulation has evoked a commendable response from entrepreneurs. More than 17,000 investment intentions have been filed since July 1991 totalling investment of over Rs. 3,50,000 crore with potential for direct employment for 3.4 million persons. In 1993-94, more than Rs. 25,000 crore were raised in the primary market and a similar amount disbursed by our key financial institutions. Taken together, this figure is almost 3 times the resources raised by the corporate sector on an average in the year preceding the economic reforms.

The infrastructure sector is getting a substantial share of this investment. 93 projects with a total capacity exceeding 50,000 MW are proposed in the power sector. The new National Telecommunication Policy announced last year aims at providing telephones on demand by 1997 and also to cover all villages by that year. The private sector is being permitted to enter the basic and value-added services to accelerate growth in this sector.

The internal situation in the country has shown great improvement in the last 3 years. Many of the issues which were posing a serious threat to the stability of the country have been successfully resolved while others have been brought into the legal and political processes. After the restoration of normalcy in Punjab there has been an encouraging revival of economic activity. The situation in J&K has improved, development work has restarted and beginning has been made towards restoring the political process. In the North-East also, we have demonstrated our resolve to curb disruptive elements.

The most significant change in my opinion, however, has been brought about in the social sector, in rural development and in poverty elimination. With my New Economic Policy, I have increased several-fold the allocation made to these sectors. In the last 3 years, the allocation to rural development has been increased over three-fold. During the current year it is Rs. 7,010 crore which is the highest ever in our country.

New approaches and new programmes have been devised to deal with mass poverty and unemployment. These programmes have been focused on the backward areas and on deprived groups such as agricultural labourers, small and marginal farmers, artisans, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Programmes like Jawahar Rozgar Yojana, Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana, Employment Assurance Scheme, Indira Awas Yojana, Integrated Rural Development Programme, Tools for Rural Artisans, Mahila Samriddhi Yojana, Development of Women & Children in Rural Areas and Rajiv Gandhi

National Drinking Water Mission, are all specially designed to meet the needs of the weaker sections to get remunerative employment and meet their basic needs.

Above all, with the enactment of the Constitution (73rd) Amendment Act, my Government has ensured that the development process is placed in the hands of the people directly at the level of Village Panchayats and Zila Parishads. This is an important process in the empowerment of the people and the best way to ensure the implementation of development programmes.

There is, of course, considerable scope for improvement. Economic growth has to be accelerated and determined effort has to be made to eradicate poverty. The rate of inflation has to be controlled and reduced further. These are all things on which I intend to concentrate my attention this year.

QUESTION: The Panchayati Raj has aroused high expectations. Do you really believe that the Panchayati Raj will help in alleviation of rural poverty?

PRIME MINISTER: As you are aware, our Constitution under the Directive Principles in Article 40, enjoined on the States to make provision for the organisation of Panchayats and endow them with such authority and powers as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government. The experience of the past four decades shows that while institutions of democracy at the national and State levels have, indeed, grown in strength and status, the same did not happen in respect of Panchayati Raj institutions at the village, intermediate and district levels. The Panchayati Raj Act fulfils the Constitutional mandate.

Our democracy cannot become strong unless democracy at the village is strong. A broad consensus, cutting across party lines, had

emerged over the past few years and it was realised that genuine development of rural areas can take place only through a process of decentralised planning and implementation fully involving the local people. To achieve this goal, we stand committed to the task of devolution of powers and financial resources to the Panchayati Raj institutions enabling full participation of the people in the process of nation building and development.

We have a long history of selfless voluntary work in our villages. We have recognised the critical role the voluntary sector can play in the field of development programmes and are providing whole-hearted support to voluntary bodies.

The success of the development programmes can be multiplied manifold if the people are fully involved in their implementation. The Eighth Plan relies on building and strengthening people's institutions and making people active participants. The role of the government will be to create opportunities for the process of people's involvement in developmental activities. As mentioned in the Eighth Five Year Plan, in the process of development people must 'operate' and the Government must 'cooperate'.

The success of all our development schemes is now dependent on the emergence of strong and representative local bodies in the form of Panchayats, Panchayat Samitis and Zilla Parishads all over the country. The Panchayati Raj Act has strengthened the Panchayati Raj structure in the country and has paved the way for the Panchayati Raj institutions to become vibrant grass roots level bodies which would take care of the aspects of developmental programmes in the rural areas with close involvement of the people.

QUESTION: How would the Panchayati Raj solve the problem of effective democratic representation of the deprived groups in today's rural power structure?

PRIME MINISTER: To ensure that the benefits from the strengthening of these institutions really go to the rural poor and to the weaker sections

of the society including women, we have provided that seats should be reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in these bodies in proportion to their population. In order to make reservations more meaningful, we have also proposed reservations in favour of these categories in the office of Chairperson as well.

Women constitute nearly half of the population. So at least one-third of the seats and one-third of the positions of Chairpersons will be reserved for them. These provisions would bring in a qualitative change in the composition of local bodies and make women and weaker sections equal partners in progress and development.

QUESTION: There is increasing unemployment in the country both in the rural and urban sectors. The landless agricultural workers and educated youth up to matriculation or B.A. levels are in particular most strongly affected. The problem is both of alleviation of immediate hardship and of long-term development strategy. What steps your Government have recently taken or proposes to tackle this urgent problem?

PRIME MINISTER: The major thrust in the rural development sector in the Eighth Plan is on rural employment. Notwithstanding the decline in poverty about 200 million people in rural areas are living below the poverty line, according to the 43rd round of the National Sample Survey. These statistics are in themselves frightening but they also conceal the wide regional differentiation as well as the non-homogeneity of the poor and unemployed. About 40 per cent of those living below the poverty line in rural areas are landless agricultural labour, having nothing to look forward to except employment on wages.

For them we have wage employment programmes like the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana and the Employment Assurance Scheme which seek to provide employment so that there is some money power, some purchasing power in their hands which can sustain them

for some time at least, and in course of time, take them on to sustained employment.

The Jawahar Rozgar Yojana is our largest rural employment programme; perhaps it is one of the largest employment programmes in the entire developing world. Every year, the JRY has been creating about 900 million mandays of work. But given the vast spread of the programme and the dimensions of the country, the number of days of employment created in a particular village or Panchayat is only about 20 to 30 days at the most. But I would hasten to say that even this is very significant as no other programme reaches all the Panchayats in the country in this manner and no other programme creates employment of this magnitude and rural social assets such as school buildings, roads, Panchayat Ghars, houses, irrigation tanks/wells, youth clubs, etc.

The success of JRY is also dependent on the emergence of strong and representative local bodies in the form of Panchayats, Panchayat Samitis and Zilla Parishads all over the country.

In addition to the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY), in 120 chronically backward districts where there is concentration of unemployment and underemployment, labour migration and natural resource depletion, an intensive JRY programme is under operation. Both these schemes are likely to generate about 1037 million mandays of employment at a central share of Rs 3855 crore.

Similarly, the Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS), which aims to provide assured employment to the rural poor for 100 days during the lean agricultural season, has been widely welcomed as an important initiative in tackling the chronic unemployment and underemployment registered under this scheme. This scheme was initially operative in 1778 backward blocks in the drought-prone, desert, tribal and hilly areas in which the Revamped Public Distribution System is in operation. This year, this Scheme has been extended to cover 501

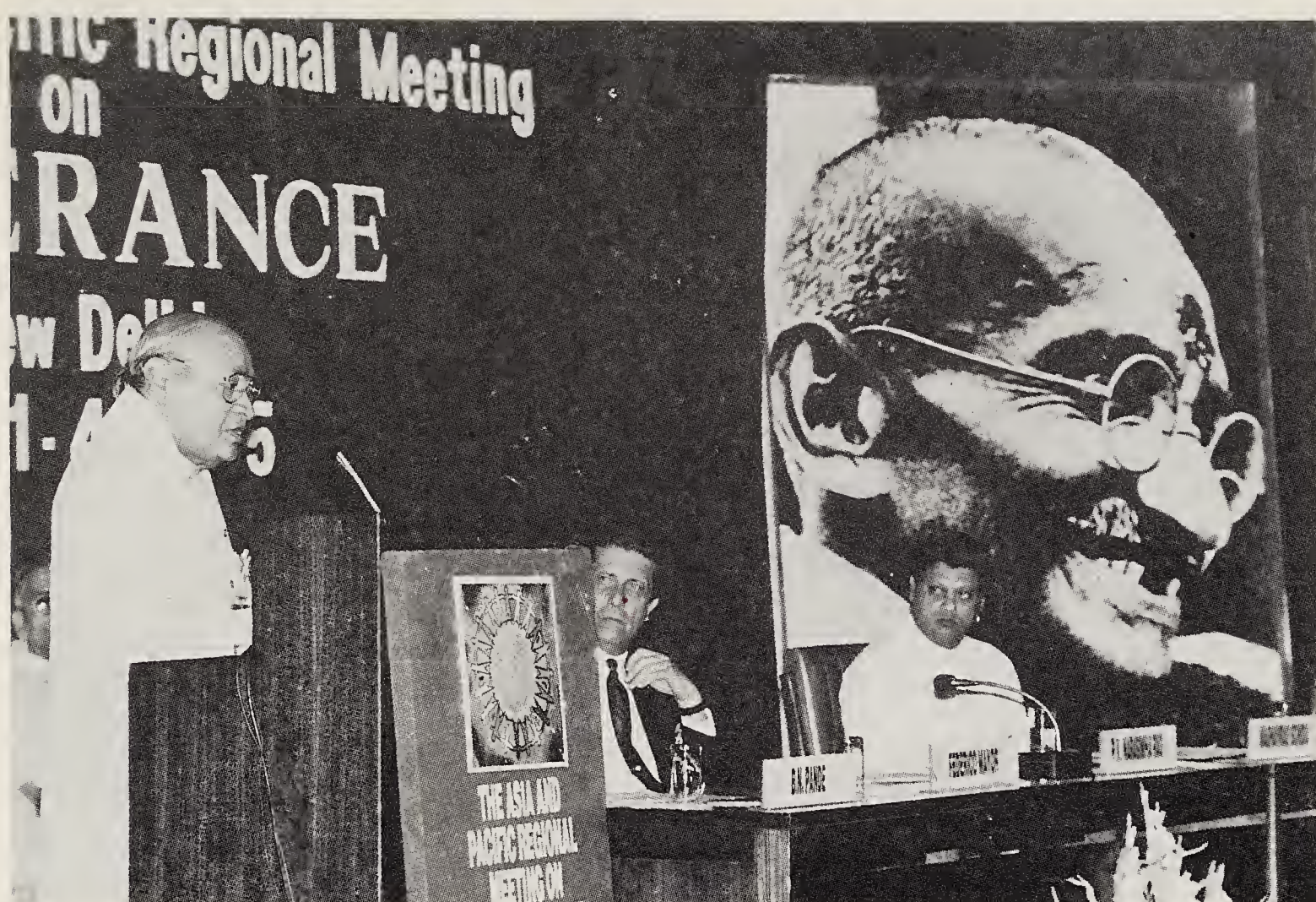
more backward blocks. EAS is gaining momentum. During 1994-95, with Central outlay of Rs 1200 crore, about 200 million mandays of employment is likely to be generated.

Our artisans from the rural areas, in spite of their rich traditions and skills belong to the poverty group. A programme aimed at upgrading their skills and supplying them with modern tool kits is in operation since 1992. So far, under this programme, about 3 lakh artisans have been assisted. This scheme has now been extended all over the country, with special focus on important artisan groups such as handicraftsmen, leather workers, wood and stone workers, metal workers and furniture makers.

IRDP seeks to transfer income generating assets to the rural poor by providing them credit and subsidies to acquire such assets. This programme is covering about 2 million rural poor families from this year. During this year nearly Rs 2,000 crore of credit and about Rs 600 crore subsidy is being provided for this scheme. Rural literate unemployed youths are specially targeted for viable self-employment under IRDP from this year onwards.

Our rural women have shown extraordinary dynamism and initiative in organising themselves for group activities for improvement of their environment and living conditions. Given an opportunity, they have demonstrated that they can manage thrift and viable economic schemes for their collective and individual benefit. This is demonstrated in the success of Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) in several States. In view of this encouraging response from rural poor women, DWCRA has been extended to all the districts in the country from this year. These groups of rural poor women would be given priority for projects of self-employment under IRDP either in groups or individually.

The Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana was specially started for providing subsidies and loans to the educated unemployed youth, totalling in all Rs. 1 lakh in each case.



Delivering the inaugural address at the UNESCO sponsored Symposium on Tolerance, New Delhi, 1 May 1995



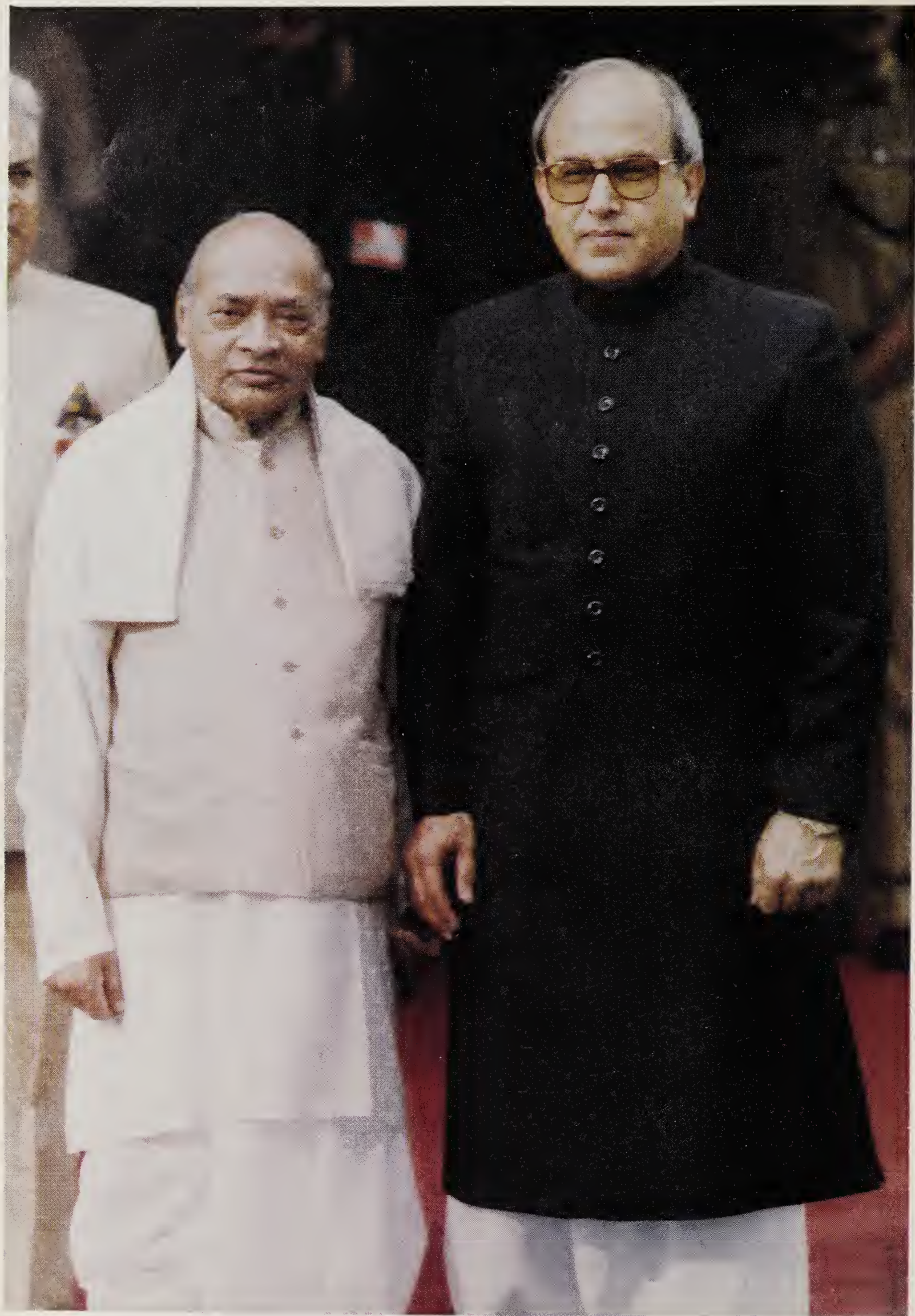
Receiving the Director General of UNESCO, Mr Federico Mayor Zaragoza, New Delhi, 1 May 1995



*Receiving the King of Bhutan, Mr Jigme Singye Wangchuk,
New Delhi, 2 May 1995*



*Receiving the President of Sri Lanka, Mrs Chandrika
Kumaratunga, New Delhi, 2 May 1995*



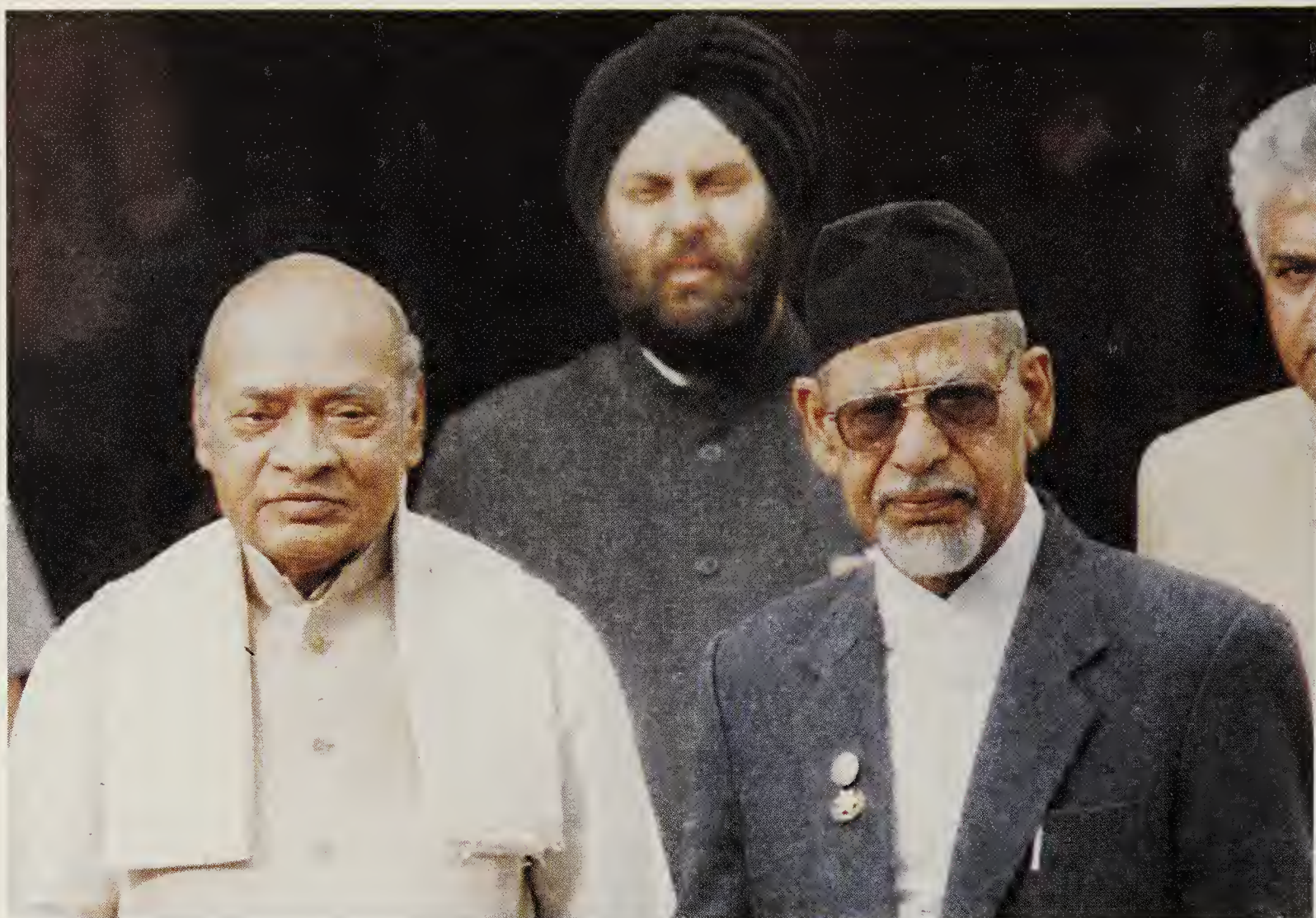
*Receiving the President of Pakistan, Mr Farooq Leghari,
New Delhi, 2 May 1995*



*Addressing the inaugural session of the 8th SAARC Summit,
New Delhi, 2 May 1995*



*Receiving the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Begum
Khaleda Zia, New Delhi, 2 May 1995*



Receiving the Prime Minister of Nepal, Mr Man Mohan Adhikari, New Delhi, 2 May 1995



With the Foreign Minister of Australia, Mr Gareth Evans, New Delhi, 19 May 1995



*With the Director General of World Trade Organisation,
Mr Renato Ruggiero, New Delhi, 30 May 1995*



*Being introduced to the Indian Community on his arrival at
Orly Airport, Paris, 11 June 1995*



With the French President, Mr Jacques Chirac at the Elysee Palace, Paris, 12 June 1995



Speaking at a meeting with businessmen and ambassadors at International Conference Centre, Paris, 12 June 1995

Under the Nehru Rozgar Yojana, the Centre gives assistance for setting up micro-enterprises and generating urban wage employment, and for upgrading dwelling units.

These are some of the specific schemes targeted at reduction of unemployment and underemployment in rural and urban areas. Together with the new economic policies that will result in a significant expansion of the economy and creation of new employment opportunities, these measures will effectively tackle the problem of unemployment.

QUESTION: Notwithstanding the impact of liberalisation and economic reforms in the key areas of economic growth, the common people are groaning under the impact of skyrocketing prices of daily use. What steps do you propose to take to check the price rise in basic necessities and inflation in general?

PRIME MINISTER: My Government is concerned about the tendency for prices to increase. We are, therefore, closely watching the trends, and taking steps to control prices. We should keep in mind that the economic reforms have greatly enhanced our capacity to combat inflation. Our comfortable foreign exchange reserves make it possible for us to import essential commodities in sufficient quantities. Government has undertaken the imports of certain essential commodities like sugar and edible oil. This has helped to check the rise in prices of these items, where there is a shortage in domestic production.

Imports of other items like pulses and cotton are also being allowed liberally. In the case of these commodities international prices are also ruling very high. In the case of wheat and rice, open market sales out of public stocks of foodgrains from the godowns of the Food Corporation of India have been undertaken. The prices at which the sales are made have recently been reduced. The growth of money supply has been more than what was anticipated mainly due to

the strong build-up of foreign exchange reserves. To check the general rate of inflation, steps are being taken to restrict the money supply. Better targeting of the Public Distribution System (PDS) is also necessary and for this purpose we had introduced the Revamped PDS (RPDS). We review and monitor the PDS and RPDS constantly ensuring their effective use to give relief to the common man. The price situation is being monitored closely and I am confident that we would be able to keep inflation in control.

QUESTION: There are increasing demands for greater State autonomy and devolution of greater resources to the State government. Do you think these demands are justified? If so, then what immediate steps you propose to take to meet these demands?

PRIME MINISTER: A Commission headed by Justice R.S. Sarkaria was set up in June, 1983 against the backdrop of the demands of some State governments and certain political parties for giving greater autonomy to the States. The Commission submitted its report on 27 October 1987. The Government considered its 247 recommendations and decided in September 1990 that the recommendations as such may be placed before the Inter-State Council. The report was subsequently taken up for discussion in the first meeting of the Inter-State Council held on 10 October 1990. The Council constituted a Sub-Committee to examine the recommendations and give concrete suggestions thereon. The Sub-Committee has examined and considered 191 recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission. After the Sub-Committee has considered all the recommendations, these would be taken up in a full meeting of the Inter-State Council. The Government would then take a view on the various recommendations of the Commission.

QUESTION: What sort of extra thrust do you propose to provide to make the economic reforms programme more beneficial for the common man?

PRIME MINISTER: The reforms are aimed at substantial acceleration of our economic growth. However, since it takes time for the benefits

to trickle down, I decided on a lateral injection of resources at the village levels to provide for employment generation, education, health and other social needs. We shall continue to have special schemes designed to reach those sections of society which are unable to reap the benefits of the reform process directly. We will also fine tune the existing schemes according to the needs and demands of the people, from time to time.

QUESTION: Corruption is not something for which there is a ready solution and I think most people have learnt to live with it up to a point. But what is most disquieting is the recent trend of growing corruption at higher levels of the bureaucracy and political establishments. Some of the biggest scams have been in banking, stock market and in the public managed sectors of the economy. Can you tell us how concerned is your Government about this issue and what important steps it has recently taken or proposes to take in the near future to bring this menace under control?

PRIME MINISTER: Government is concerned about corruption and has been investigating cases coming to light. Action has been taken wherever charges have been established. This is an ongoing process. We have to ensure that our vigilance machinery is alert. However, I would also like to point out that not all allegations are necessarily true. Unless there is evidence of corruption which can be proved in a court of law, it would be unfair to punish a person.

I am also trying to ensure that this problem is addressed through systems improvement. The steps taken by my Government to abolish licensing and simplify procedures at various levels will enhance transparency in administration and reduce the scope for arbitrariness which often provide the opportunity and temptation for corruption.

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